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*BURNSIANA*







# BURNSIANA:

*A COLLECTION OF LITERARY ODDS AND ENDS*

RELATING TO

## ROBERT BURNS

COMPILED BY

### JOHN D. ROSS

AUTHOR OF "SCOTTISH POETS IN AMERICA,"  
AND EDITOR OF "CELEBRATED SONGS OF SCOTLAND," "ROUND BURNS' GRAVE," ETC.

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Vol. III.

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= III

ALEXANDER GARDNER

Publisher to Her Majesty the Queen

PAISLEY; AND 26 PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON

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1894





“ Not to his native land alone  
His genius and his fame belong,  
In other climes is treasured dear  
His matchless legacy of song ;  
His melodies have echoing gone  
To Continents and Isles afar,  
They cheer and gladden hearts alike  
'Neath Southern Cross and Polar Star.”

—*Duncan MacGregor Crerar.*



THIS THIRD VOLUME OF "BURNSIANA"

*Is Dedicated to*

PROFESSOR JOHN STUART BLACKIE,

OF WHOSE ENTHUSIASM FOR BURNS AND ALL THINGS SCOTTISH

IT IS UNNECESSARY TO SPEAK.







### NOTE TO VOLUMES III. AND IV.

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THE success that attended the publication of Volumes I. and II. of this work, and the large amount of material on the subject of Burns which has accumulated on my hands of late, have induced me to issue Volumes III. and IV. simultaneously. Thanks are again sincerely tendered to Subscribers, Contributors, and well-wishers.

JOHN D. ROSS.

126 PALMETTO STREET,  
BROOKLYN, N.Y., U.S.A.







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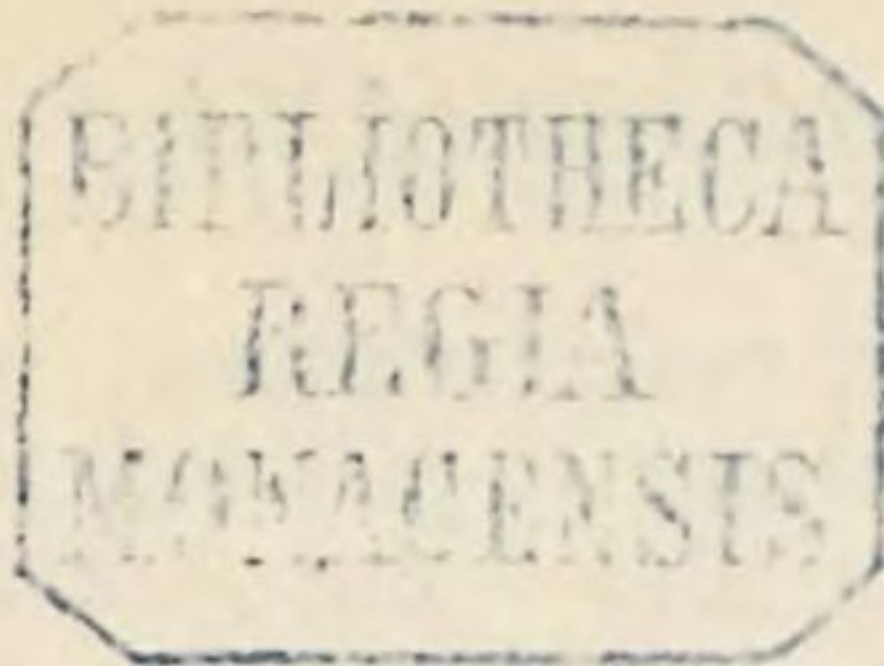
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# BURNSIANA.

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## I.—MR. LEWIS M'IVER ON BURNS.

*Address delivered before the Edinburgh Burns Club, January 25th, 1893.*

REPRINTED FROM *THE SCOTSMAN*.

THERE is no room for affectation in the timidity with which I approach the duty imposed on me to-night by your flattering but mistaken confidence. It is in sincere fright, born of conscious incompetence, that I rise in response to the chair, and I can only plead in extenuation of my shortcomings that when this honour was first proposed to me I earnestly urged the incompetence as an excuse from undertaking a task to which I am in no sense equal. It was not so much the intrinsic greatness of the subject—great as it is—that made me pause. It was not so much that in speaking of Burns to the members of the Burns Club I should be in the position of an amateur addressing professionals on their own speciality. It was not even my own lack of critical capacity. I knew my audience would supply that abundantly and to spare. None of these weighty considerations daunted me so much as the immanent recollection of a certain famous roll inscribed on the records of this Club—the names of those who aforetime have essayed at this board to strike a note worthy of this theme; essayed in divers tones and with various measures of fulfilment fitly to glorify a memory to maintain and honour which this Club exists. Some of them long since “set out to sea,” many of them, we are glad to remember, yet living amongst us, but all of an eminence and an eloquence to which I have no claim—all fortified by knowledge of their subject, furnished with critical faculty wherewith to treat it, brimful of quotation for its

ornament, and mirth for its enlivenment. Gentlemen, when I thought of the long and distinguished list of these my predecessors, when I reflected what were their qualifications and wondered where were mine, I shrank from the audacity of attempting to imitate them, and half resolved that, instead, I would only attempt to chronicle them. For I realised that with last year this Club had completed the first quarter century of its fully recorded work—a quarter of a century of gatherings such as this—a quarter of a century of worthy, witty, brilliant orations such as this is not—and then the thought occurred to me that I might, perhaps, find a safe way out of an *impasse*, if, instead of a twenty-sixth speech unworthy to be included in your *Liber Aureus*, I offered you an Index or a Table of Contents for that unique volume, and in thus helping to complete it, I might lay a humble claim to collaboration, much in the same way as that actor who claimed to have played in “Hamlet” with Kean, when, as a matter of fact, he had only been told off to produce the crowing of the cock in the ghost scene. Various reasons, including your stock of patience, forbid my realising this scheme to-night, but it would be no inglorious task to remind you of the names and recall the words of those who have thus delighted to honour Burns and have delighted others in the doing. It would be as though a simple citizen, standing reverently before that enduring shrine which the poet’s fellow-countrymen have erected to him in their hearts, and,



having no flowers of his own to offer, took upon him the duty of collecting and arranging the splendid wreaths and immortelles already laid there in profusion by famous Scotsmen—and added thereto the roll of their names, representing, as it does, much of the best in brains and breed, or both, that the land o' Burns has produced since his own time. To read that list, gentlemen, is like glancing over the social history of Scotland during the last twenty-five years. It gives you milestones in the record of our professions, our art, our literature, our statecraft; eminent doctors, learned judges and lawyers; painters, poets, and journalists; a roll that stretches from James Bannatyne to Cameron Lees—in which jurisprudence is represented by names such as Inglis and Moncrief, Young, and Shand—journalism by Stoddart and Charles Cooper—and which reverences literature by beginning with Professor Masson and ending with Andrew Lang. Such a list needs to Edinburgh men and Scottish men no embellishment of mine. With such an index to its first volume it is not necessary to remind the members of this Club of the cloud of testimony from outside which supports them in their self-appointed task of keeping fresh and green "the immortal memory," nor to recall that unparalleled outburst of a nation's enthusiasm—which is one of the most vivid recollections of my own boyhood—on this day thirty-four years ago, when Scotland, from John o' Groat's to Wigtown Bay, from Aberdeen to Ardnamurchan, blazed into hero-worship—when the English-speaking world as well as the Scottish-speaking world stood up to do honour to that memory; that night when not only every town and hamlet in our country held high revel, but when every city in India, every sheep station in Australia, every knot of log cabins in Canada saw drawn together groups of Scotsmen in whose hearts a national pride was fired anew by the name of him whose magic had added lustre to their common country, and infused a deathless music into their common tongue. Needless, too, to recall the tributes of Ardmillan, and Monckton Milnes, and Isa Craig, of Lockhart and Carlyle, of Emerson and Lowell, of Goethe and Heine, or the other famous names in

German and French literature who have justified to all time the cult of this Club. But with a chorus of such voices, who shall name our Poet unwept, unhonoured, or unsung, *caret quia vate sacro*? I think, although I have abandoned the project, I may have suggested to you that duly to praise his prophets—fitly to sing those who sang the singer—is a worthy task for worthier yet to do; and that to-night, when we rise to drink the immortal memory of Burns, it may be fitting to feel that we also stand uncovered in the presence of those who have decorated that memory—the illustrious living, the glorious dead—those who, having made their mark on the rock of life, paused, ere going, to lay of their best on his tomb, and then sped on to join him in the beyond; and those who, still enriching the world by their presence and their work, have rejoiced to add fragrance to his memory by their word. Far be it from me to suggest that there is not much yet to say of our many-sided poet—and much well worth the saying—only I am not competent to say it. The subject is a well-nigh inexhaustible mine. But the mine is to the miners, and criticism to the critics. To measure his achievements relatively to others, to weigh his effect on letters, to winnow, select, and appraise the work he produced, demands the scientific standard, the trained balance, the fine-meshed sieve which belongs to an honoured department of literature. To admire, to deplore, to love is not enough. But the defect of this equipment whereby the learned perpend and pronounce, does not prevent us, others—the rest of the world—from *feeling* Burns—feeling, enjoying, and loving his work, as does our whole nation; while

"Sister lands have learned to love the tongue  
In which such songs are sung."

There is no side of our common humanity to which he does not irresistibly appeal, and there is no thought of racial exclusiveness or class distinction in the movement of that appeal. He never fails to find that "touch of nature" which "makes the whole world kin," and not one song alone, but the better part of all his work helps to awaken and sustain in our hearts the inspiring, ennobling creed of the individual dignity and the universal



brotherhood of man ; not only "a man's a man for a' that," but

"Man to man the world o'er  
Shall brothers be for a' that."

That is his larger, his cosmopolitan aspect. But his "brither Scots" may be forgiven if, looking nearer home, they incline more fondly to dwell on another, perhaps narrower, but certainly more concentrated and potent effect of his genius. That he absolutely revived a dead, or dormant, national literature ; that his fiery impetus swept away the always exotic and sometimes over-precious stuff which at that time masqueraded as Scottish literature—because, forsooth, it was printed in Edinburgh—that his choice of domestic subjects inspired a new school ; that his example, and what he called his "tide of Scottish prejudice," cleared the ground for *Waverley*, and Hogg, and Tannahill, was a great achievement. That in "the fire-eyed fury" of "Scots Wha Hae" he endowed his country with the "greatest war ode" of all time ; that he gave us the most perfect hymn of brotherhood in "Auld Lang Syne," and in the "Banks and Braes" an ideal love song, unsurpassed from Anacreon to Beranger, is a unique record. But with simple lovers of the Bard among his countrymen his grandest claim rests on that enduring sense of common kinship which he awoke among us, and which the very mention of his name suffices to rouse into flame. It matters little what others may call it—particularism, clannishness, separatism. We Scotsmen call it patriotism—and patriotism it is, in the best and noblest sense of the word—a patriotism which makes for peace and love, and not for jealousy and aggression—a love of country which does not involve hatred of other countries, and includes not only pride in our country's history and tradition, but a delight in all that belongs to her—her people and her language, her hills and dales, her woods and streams, her flowers and birds, but, above all, the feeling, all the world over, of Scottishmen to Scottishmen. This we owe largely to Burns—to the stirring into life and speech our national thoughts, and not alone to the music to which he set our joys and sorrows, our love and humour, but to the unsealing of a whole peoples' life, and the find-

ing for them utterance for the feelings, the yearnings, the frozen thoughts that till then had been mute. He forced a people into song. His music compelled a national hearing, and awoke national echoes that never more are wholly silent. His laughter, his fears, his passion, his tenderness, his ire, his gloom—

"So clear, so deep, the divine drear accents flow,  
No soul that listens may choose but thrill to know,  
Pierc'd and wrung by the passionate music's throe."

Till, as his greatest critic has said—"His songs are already part of the mother tongue, not of Scotland only, but of Britain, and of millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many coloured joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice* of that joy and that woe is that name and voice which Burns has given them." To this, more than to anything, is it due that Burns's personality is to-day as living a possession as though he were yet amongst us, and that the Man is enshrined in our hearts as surely as the Poet is secure in the Temple of Fame. It is nigh a hundred years since he left us, and yet so green, so fresh, so intimate is his memory to peer and peasant that Robbie is spoken of as familiarly and as fondly as though we had known him in life and mourned at his death. His life, its troubles, his character, his qualities, and his failings are better known, are still discussed with keener interest than those of our relations or neighbours who died yesterday. Greatly as we delight and glory in his work, our strongest feelings go out to the Man. Whatever the judgment of the cognoscenti on his literary place and rank, each of us will champion his own estimate of the Man. While others discuss the sincerity of his treatment or his graphic gift, the "vigour of his intellectual perception," or the intensity of his feeling, the width of his range, or the epigrammatic terseness of his phrase, we are thinking of Rob Mossgiel, not alone the ploughman, poet, patriot, or democrat, but that which included and summed them all—the "fully unfolded man"—the "gentleman who drew his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God." As to his place in our hearts, at all events, there is no controversy. But this



very affection for Burns on the part of his countrymen and the interest it has created in everything connected with him have not always resulted in justice to his reputation; for, coupled with the phenomenal facts of his meteoric career and the tragedy of his too brief life, they have evoked a persistence and minuteness of inquiry into everything in or bearing on his life such as few of us would like to be submitted to. A dozen biographies per decade his memory might withstand; but the inventive fussing of some scores of collectors of personalia and anecdotes to which his record has been subjected has been more than any name could survive untarnished. Talk about the "fierce light which beats upon a throne!" What is that to the flashing electric searchlights of modern scientific biography, supplemented by the farthing dips of those who pry and burrow into the nooks and crannies of dead men's lives? In the case of Burns one result of the imaginative, and not always benevolent, industry of the "reminiscence man" is that not only do we know all he ever did, or said, or wrote, but we can know, if we like to believe, a great deal that he never did, nor said, nor wrote—from that apocryphal and astounding story of his fishing in fancy costume girt with a huge claymore to the precious manuscripts which have recently given a temporary tenant to Calton Jail. At one time Burns' life and character were as a shuttlecock between honest, but often injudicious and indiscriminate, worship on the one side, and equally honest, no doubt, but too often narrow and dogmatic censoriousness, on the other. And although time with its softening influence and its juster perspective has brought a calmer judgment and a better sense of proportion, the old unworthy controversy still survives, and scandals, wholly discredited and discarded by competent biographers, are from time to time renewed with much parade of judicial impartiality, and, let us hope, in the belief that some useful purpose is served by thus disinterring and mutilating the reputations of men and women long since gone to their rest. We might afford to disregard this ghoulish work were it not that sometimes the mud sticks and fair-minded men's impressions are unconsciously

coloured thereby, so that many of the Bard's sincere admirers are still inclined sensitively to deprecate close inquiry into his history. They touched it very lightly, and generally seem glad to get away from that part of their subject. Well, gentlemen, I for one repudiate that apologetic attitude. I hold that it has been vastly overdone. For, after all, what does it all come to? What are the charges? I do not ask you to ignore or to condemn anything, but what are the facts? First, that an eminently joyous, genial man, not only socially gregarious but gifted, perhaps unhappily for himself, with a subtle and fascinating attractiveness for his fellows, and submitted to a wholly exceptional amount of temptation, was occasionally betrayed into social excesses by no means exceptional even for ordinary men in those days; while, on the other hand, we know that he recognized the evil there was in this, and strove manfully against it.

"What's done we partly may compute,  
But kenna what's resistit."

To measure this matter with even approximate fairness, you must put yourself in his place and in his time—a place absolutely unique in the degree and persistence of its temptation, and a time when there was probably not a conscious teetotaller in Scotland; when, at all events, there was a supposed dignity in drunkenness. It is not necessary to accept the cynicism that "all virtue is the absence of temptation" in order to defend the Bard on this point. Rather, I find ground for admiration in the determined, and often for prolonged periods successful, resistance which he offered to the insidious and many-headed temptation by which he was surrounded. Interpreting his history faithfully, we might claim that he led a sort of temperance movement in his own mind; that, like the modern movement, it had periods of success interrupted by lapses and backslidings; and that, despite the better social attitude and the better example of to-day, his pledges broken and renewed find their counterparts in well-nigh every Good Templar lodge and Rechabite tent in modern Scotland. The second and more serious charge upon which he has been arraigned is of his relations with the other sex. Gentlemen, here again, I am



not going to ask you to ignore or condone anything. And in this relation it would be indecorous for me to ask you to put yourselves in his place. I will not even invite you, as I well might, to consider the morals of the times or the customs of the class in the country and in the period in which he lived. But I may ask you to realise that the period of his life from which this act of indictment is drawn is limited to some five or six years, and in the adolescence of a life which was never fully grown up. Till twenty-three we know he was of virginal innocence. At twenty-nine he was finally and formally married to the wife whose kind and loving husband he was till his death. Of a single deplorable aberration after his marriage I will say nothing; for if his noble wife saw fit to draw a sponge over it, we are hardly entitled to discuss it. During the period that immediately preceded his marriage there had been episodes—at least one authenticated episode—which I do not seek to minimise, extenuate, or defend; but if he is to be judged, I do claim, before he is condemned, that he be judged as a whole. Here we have a man—a peerless man—a warm-hearted, impulsive, impassioned man of a grateful, loving, impressionable and responsive nature, starting from the humblest root, absolutely untutored in the world's ways, plunged into abnormal surroundings, sore-tried in the fire of adversity, which, if it purifies the substance, nearly always sears and scars the surface, and we know of this man that he was a good and devoted friend, a good and dutiful son, a good and generous brother, a good and attentive husband, a good and affectionate father. Of how many can we say as much? Who of us can afford to throw a stone at such a character? I ask who are we to judge of a nature whose complex impulses are as far removed from our ken as the stars, set in circumstances of which we know but the outside, storm-driven, and tempted by agencies impossible of evidence? When one thinks of the puny limits of our capacity to measure human forces and human motives even in matters of to-day of the infinite fallibility of our judgment even when apparently adequate evidence is before it, one is tempted to turn from hasty human verdicts to that trustful

tribute to Divine justice and forgiveness which came from a soul kindred to Burns in song and in affliction—*tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*—fully to understand everything would be fully to forgive everything. But if we are to deal out human judgments in the matter of moles and beams, let us take thought that “mercy tempers justice”:—

“Then gently scan your brither man,  
Still gentler sister woman;  
Though they may gang a-kennin wrang,  
To step aside is human.  
One point must still be greatly dark,  
The moving *why* they do it;  
And just as lamely can ye mark  
How far perhaps they rue it.”

So the poet pleaded on behalf of every ordinary man and woman. With how much greater force may we urge it in defence of a man circumstanced as Burns was, and of a character and temperament such as he possessed—the strongest points in which were inevitably correlated to complimentary weaknesses. I am not claiming, as Sir Archibald Alison once said, an “exemption from moral responsibility for the sons of genius.” But I am asking you to remember that every nature has the defects of its qualities, and the greater the nature the more marked are the extremes. And looking back at that pathetic figure—its beauties and its blemishes alike heroic—in its lonely, unequal, and yet victorious combat with Titanic forces, grasping the difficulties, the struggles that beset him, the temptations that encircled and bound him like a new Prometheus, realising the whole tragedy of that too short life, I am grateful to remember the beautiful words of our greatest poetess, where she mourns the cost to his own humanity and to his own natural place with his fellows, at which a man takes life-service with the muses. Many of you will recall that wonderful figure of the great god Pan:—

“Down in the reeds by the river  
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,  
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat;”

and, setting out to make a poet out of a man,

“He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,  
From the deep cool bed of the river.

“And hack'd and hewed as a great god can . . .  
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed  
To prove it fresh from the river.



"He cut it short, did the great god Pan,  
(How tall it stood in the river?)  
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,  
Steadily from the outside ring,  
And notched the poor dry empty thing  
In holes as he sat by the river."

He produced music in good truth "when he  
blew in power by the river."

"Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!  
Piercing sweet by the river!  
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!  
The sun on the hill forgot to die,  
And the lilies revived and the dragon fly  
Came back to dream on the river."

"Yet"—and here is the tragedy of it!"

"Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,  
To laugh as he sits by the river,  
Making a poet out of a man.  
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—  
For the reed which grows never more again  
As a reed with the reeds in the river."

The poet is not only by nature something apart. He is almost invariably by circumstances set apart from the lives of other men. He is, as Mrs. Browning sings, torn up by the roots and set to grow alone, taking sustenance from himself and from that mysterious ether whence comes his inspiration. Surely, surely, if we are going to judge his life at all, we should, at all events, judge it gently. Mr. Chairman, when I began, I warned this goodly company of what they were in for; but, until I was fairly embarked, I had no notion how portentously dull I could be. And herein is a double crime; for gloom is most inopportune at a convivial gathering, and dulness—always inexcusable—is an outrage in connection with a prince of good-fellows, the father of so much mirth in the past, in the present, and in the ages yet to come. That is the side of the

"Sad, glad poet  
Whose soul was a white dove lost in the whirling  
snow,"

which is meetest for to-night; and, after all, to invert the words of Marc Antony, I come to praise, not to bury, Burns. On the occasion of a genuine "nicht wi' Burns" there is no need of an invocation to Euphrosyne. And one has but to pull out the mirthful stop in that magnificent instrument in order to flood this room with sunshine. That done, the scalpel of criticism is out of place. None

of us want to dissect a nightingale. For then enter

Sport that wrinkled care derides,  
And laughter holding both his sides.

Then *exeunt*, abashed, "loathed melancholy" and all her crew! Himself by nature the gladdest and mirthfulest of souls; in his youth, despite poverty and hardship, "the gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating being to be found in the world"—and, later, even when troubles and difficulties and disappointments were closing in on him like a cloud, when physical ailments were crippling him, his native buoyancy was wont to reassert itself, and at intervals to flash out in mad gaiety with an invincible humour almost equal to that of him who "lived a life of sturt and strife," and "died by treacherie."

"Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,  
Sae dauntonly gaed he:  
He played a spring and danced it round  
Below the gallows tree."

And the gladsomeness of Burns lives for ever in his songs; and even as they are his most enduring monument, so his mirth and joyousness, which they embalm, are our indestructible possession. He has been above all things a benefactor of humanity, and especially of his own countrymen as a songster, and a glad songster:—

"God sent His singers upon earth  
With songs of sadness and of mirth,  
That they might touch the hearts of men,  
And bring them back to heaven again."

If with firm and confident finger he struck many noble and lofty chords in the national harp that no musician before or since has found, and which still vibrate, and will continue to vibrate while the heart of Scotland beats, he has also given echoing expression to the gayest and gladdest impulses of our nature. He discovered a rich mine of joyousness under the rough rock surface of our national character. He brought its gems to light from the depths. He cut and polished them, and he left them to us an imperishable inheritance, a perennial source of brightness and good-fellowship; and we can best perpetuate our gratitude and his glorious name by keeping foremost that brightest aspect of his achievement, and by being glad to think



of him as he would have chosen we should.  
What though—

“ His regal vestments soil’d,  
His crown of half its jewels spoil’d,  
He is a king for all.”

In moments such as this, we honour him most, not by analysing his work, not by deploring what he did not do in poetry or what

he did do in life, but by gratefully recognising what he has done for us—what wealth he left us, what gladness he gave us, by hymning his praise as one who not only was every inch a man—and Scottish at that—who not only was the truest poet and the world’s most peerless song-maker—but was also the father of our merriest moments.

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### BURNS IN 1893.

EDITORIAL IN *SCOTSMAN*, January 26th, 1893.

SCOTSMEN get credit, but only in the eyes of prejudiced and superficial people, for being the most prosaic and sober-witted of men. Yet they are the only race that keep a day sacred to the Muse of Song. Yesterday, wherever, at the utmost ends of the earth, two or three of them were gathered together, they toasted the “immortal memory” of Burns, and hanned the fame of their bard with grateful thoughts and eloquent words, with lyric verse and music. This is not a people whose heart has hardened, and whose ideas have become conventionalised. In honouring Burns, Scotland honours its own better part, and it will be time to deplore the decay of the national spirit and character when his countrymen begin to grow ashamed of, or indifferent to, the national poet. Assuredly that day is still far off. If one may judge by the gatherings at Burns festivals, and the enthusiasm displayed there, by the frequency with which the name and the fame, the life and the words, of the poet find mention in the conversation and the literature of the day, the Ayrshire Ploughman is a growing, and not a waning, power in his own land and outside its bounds. Yet it wants little more than three years till the centenary of his death, poor, neglected, and heart-broken, at an age when, with most men, the best work of their lives is still before them. It is the last and highest proof of the poet’s greatness that his fragmentary song should thus abide the test of time. What has preserved its dew and freshness through all the changes and distractions of a busy century is safe to last as long as the race. But, as Mr. Lewis M’Iver pointed out in his eloquent ad-

dress at the Burns Anniversary dinner in the Waterloo Rooms, Burns is not the peculiar possession of Scotsmen. They stand nearest to him; he speaks a language which they only can fully understand in its more subtle and poignant meanings, and his words go more directly to their hearts. But his message was not for a nation, but for the round world. A patriot to the core, his sympathies went out to all human kind, and he struck notes which find responsive chords in the heart of every man who feels and thinks. Thus, as Mr. M’Iver reminds us, it is scarcely less inspiring to look at the circle of Burns’ admirers, living and dead, than at the poet himself. The votaries have been worthy of the shrine. They embrace men of all ranks and professions, of many nations, and of the most diverse types and opinions. Appreciation and love of Burns may very well stand as the test of a man’s liberality of spirit and capacity for extending his sympathies beyond the narrow circle of self. The taste that is too fine to be captivated by his fancy we suspect to be superfine; the heart that is not touched to laughter or tears by his humour and his pathos we judge to be too coarse or case-hardened; it is not made of “penetrable stuff.”

As sure as a Burns anniversary comes round, the faults of his brief career are dragged again to the light and subjected to microscopic examination and not too charitable comment. We are asked to praise him less as Poet—or to refrain from praise and take to denunciation—because he was not perfect as a Man. Against this tone Mr. M’Iver raises a noble and eloquent protest.



Surely now that nearly a hundred years have passed since the chapter of his errors was completed, we might be content to close the book. His faults, such as they were, were heavily punished and bitterly repented of in his lifetime. But the sect of the Pharisees promises to be as immortal as the memory of Burns. The poet was not cold in his grave when the cry began to go up that his sins must be kept in perpetual remembrance. His friend, William Nicol, of the High School, speaks indignantly of it. It gave him great pain, he wrote, to see the encomiums of the poet "mixed with reproaches of the most indelicate and cruel nature; but stupidity and idiocy rejoice when a great and immortal genius falls." The chorus has continued down to our own day. Cant and uncharitableness chiefly inspire it, since dulness itself can no longer deny the supreme merit of the poet. But the priceless boon of the living song is ignored, and every forgotten slip made by the dead singer is noted and proclaimed on the housetops. It is not desirable that Burns' life and character should be presented as other than what they were. But it is right that his work and himself should be appraised and judged as a whole. He comes to us, after every item has been set against his name that envy or malice can suggest, with an enormous balance at his credit. He has claims upon the gratitude of his fellow-men and his fellow-countrymen that no words can express or love repay. He has done more for liberty than whole libraries of statute books; more for literature than all the tomes of the Encyclopædists. The lines written by the "good gray poet" of New England, who died last year, are scarcely overstrained:—

"Give fettered pomp to teeth of Time,  
So 'Bonnie Doon' but tarry;  
Blot out the Epic's stately rhyme,  
But spare his 'Highland Mary.'"

As for morals, since morality is in question, it may be said of Burns that he has exerted a more healthy and purifying influence upon the general body of human thought and speech than schools of philosophy and seminaries of priests. In the mere cleansing and reviving of our ballad literature, how much do not Scotland and the world that has an ear

for music and romance owe him. At his magic touch the familiar songs of the people sprang up again in new sweetness—"fairer and not less old." And if love and mirth have a rightful place in a world cold and sad enough without them, who has sung and laughed with truer note and fuller heart?

On the whole may it not be said that no Scotsman and few among the sons of men have left so rich and gracious a heritage behind them? Let the formalist keep the record of the stumblings of the poet on the arduous and thorny path which he had to tread; large-hearted and large-minded men will mark where the path led, and note that even when prone in the mire his eye was still fixed on the star. The qualities that give Burns his peculiar place among the singers of all time are his truth and his fearlessness. He saw and sang the beauty of things held vulgar and below the noble office of poetry by the modish bards of his day. He was one of the first, in an artificial age, to proclaim the dignity of toil and the nobility of simple manly worth. With "A Man's a Man for a' that" engraved on the memory of the world, it has been easier to remember, harder to forget, that there is nothing low in lowly estate. That these eighteenth century artificialities influenced his own surface thought and speech is evident enough in his correspondence, and even in his English verse. But when he turned to his native Doric he became himself again, as at the magic touch of his mother earth; and his words, tender and melancholy, or playful and scathing, became the very accents of human nature. Herein we may find another reason for cherishing the memory of Burns. For it is certain that, though the national spirit and character may remain and grow stronger, the mother-tongue which Burns spoke so surpassing well threatens to "wear awa" with the years and their changes. The songs of Burns give it, more than any single thing else, its hope of immortality. But against it is leagued the grinding modern forces—the Code and the Railway perhaps in the front—that make for uniformity, and rub down all that is characteristic and outstanding in national manners and modes of thought and speech. The present generation of educated Scotsmen have lost or



are losing the habit and gift of speaking the "braid Scots" that was the common speech of gentle and simple, although, thanks to Burns above all, they have not lost the relish for and understanding of it. Our children understand it and use it still less. Will there come, along with this process, a gradual failure of appreciation for Burns and his lilt of love, and sorrow, and gladness? This

would be a loss past all reckoning, for which the remote contingency of the coming of a new Burns, writing in the Queen's English approved by the Education Department, would not be recompense. All that can be said of such a dismal future is that no shadow of its coming is to be discovered in the speeches and proceedings of the Burns Festivals.

### III.—COLONEL ROBERT G. INGERSOLL ON BURNS.

*Address delivered before the Chicago (Ills.) Caledonian Society, January 23rd, 1893.*

*Reprinted from "The Western British American."*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—We have met to-night to honour the memory of a great poet—possibly the next to the greatest that has ever written in our language. If I should give him the place which he is entitled to, taking into consideration what he has done for me, I should place him second, one above him and only one—Shakespeare.

We are here to-night, I say, to honour a poet, and it may be well enough to inquire in the first place what a poet is? What is poetry? Every one has some idea of a poet, and this idea is born of his experience, of his impressions, of his education, and depends largely whether his soul has burst into blossom. There have been more nations than poets. Many people imagine that poetry is a kind of art, depending upon certain rules, and that it is only necessary to find out the rules, and if that were all, possibly it would be impossible to find out the rule. These rules have never been found, and yet the great poet follows them unconsciously, and the great poet is as unconscious as nature, and the product of the highest art seems always to be felt instead of thought. The finest definition perhaps that has been given is this: "As nature unconsciously produces that which appears to be the result of conscience, so the greatest artist unconsciously produces that which appears to have been an unconscious result."

Poetry, after all, must rest on the experience of men. It must sit by the fireside of the heart. It must have to do with this world,

with the place in which we live, with the men and women we know, with our loves, with our hopes, with our fears and with our joys. The cloud-compelling Jupiters, the ox-eyed Junos, the feather-heeled Mercuries, and the Minervas that spring fully armed from the thick skull of some imaginary god, are not poetical. We know nothing of them, and by no possibility can we sympathize with them. Such poets, or poems about such people or such phantoms are ingenious, but they are not poetic, and they never will and never can touch the heart.

I was taught that Milton was a wonderful poet, and, above all others, sublime. I have read Milton once. Few people ever read him twice. With splendid words, with magnificent mythological imagery he musters the heavenly militia, puts epaulets on the shoulders of God and describes the devil as an artillery officer of the first rank. Then he describes the battles in which immortals undertake the impossible task of killing each other. And this is called poetry! This is called sublime!

We have been taught, also, that Dante was a wonderful poet. He describes, with infinite minuteness, the pangs and agonies endured by the damned in the torture dungeons of God. But there was one good thing about Dante—and for that one good thing I have forgiven him many faults. He had the religious democracy in his heart and the courage to see a Pope in hell. That is something to be thankful for. So the sonnets



of Petrarch are as unmeaning as the promises of candidates. They are filled, not with genuine passion, not with what another feels, but with what one supposes a lover might feel.

Poetry cannot be written by rule. It is not a trade. It is not a profession. Let the critics lay down the laws of poetry and the true poet will violate them all. By the rule, such as the critics make, you can construct skeletons, but you cannot clothe them with flesh; you cannot put sight in their eyes and passion in their hearts. That is not to be done by rule. It can be done only by following the impulses of the heart, the winged fancies of a wonderful brain; by wandering from ruts and from paths, keeping step with the rhythmic ebb and flow of the throbbing blood.

In the old time, in Scotland, most of the so-called poetry was written by pedagogues and parsons—gentlemen that found out what little they knew about the living world by reading the dead languages, by studying epitaphs in the cemeteries of literature. They knew nothing of any living thing that they themselves thought poetic; the men then living were not worth writing about. The women then alive were not beautiful enough to attract their scholarly attention. They bestowed their praise on the dead, on dust, on skeletons, on phantoms—phantoms, that if they did not live here, were supposed to live somewhere else. They put metaphysics, or endeavoured to—that is to say Calvinism—into their poetry. Imagine a Calvinistic poet. As a matter of fact a Calvinist never was and never will be a poet. That creed takes all the poetry out of this world. If the existence of the Calvinistic, the orthodox Christian creed can be demonstrated, another poet would never live in this world, and have a pretty poor show in the next. In those days they made poetry about geography, poetry about the Scotch kirk and, would you believe it, even about the law. The critics then always looked for mistakes, not beauties, not for perfection of expression and feeling; syntax; grammar. These gentlemen would object to the clouds, because they are not square. And at one time it was thought the scenery, the grand and beautiful

in nature, made the poet. Let me tell you to-night: It is the poet who makes the scenery, the scenery never made a poet and never made an artist in the world. The poet makes the scenery. Holland has produced far more genius than the Alps. There is not much scenery in Holland.

Where nature is prodigal, where the crags kiss the clouds, man is over-awed, over-powered, and becomes small. In England and Scotland the hills are low; nothing in the scenery is calculated to arouse poetic life, and yet those countries have produced the greatest and the most magnificent of all poets of all time. The truth is the poets make the scenery. The place where man has died for man is grander than any snow-crowned summit in the world, the place where man has loved and suffered.

A poem itself is something like scenery, and let me say right here that there is greater scenery in this world than the physical. There are mental seas and continents, and ranges of mountains and constellations of the imagination greater than the eye has ever yet beheld. A poem is something like a mountain stream that ripples into light and then lost in shadow, ripples along with a kind of wild joy under overhanging boughs, and then leaps and hurls its spray on high over some cascade, and then running peacefully along over pebbly bottoms, babbling of joy, murmuring delight and then sweeping along to its old mother, the sea. A mountain stream is a poem in itself.

Thousands and millions of men live poems, but do not write them; but every great poem that was ever written has been lived by the man who wrote it. I say to-night that every good and self-denying man, every man who lives and labours for those he loves, for wife and child, is living a poem. The loving mother rocking the cradle, singing the slumber song, is living a poem, and the man who bares his breast through shot and shell for the right has lived a poem, and the poor woman in the tenement, sewing and looking with her poor blurred eyes upon her work for the love of her child is living a perfect poem, and all the pioneers and all the builders of home, and all the brave men of the world, and all the brave and loving



women have all been poets in action, whether they have ever written one word or not.

But to-night we are going to talk about a poet; one who poured out his soul in the music of song. How does a country become great? By producing great folks. Why is it that Scotland, when the roll of nations is called, can stand up and proudly cry, "Here." It is because Robert Burns has lived. It is Robert Burns that puts your well loved Scotland in the front rank of nations.

On the 25th of January, 1759, Robert Burns was born. He was born in a cottage made of mud, thatched with straw. His father was a gardener and his mother a woman that knew a vast amount of poetry. Her memory was stored with songs—and that is all we know about her. From the first poverty was the companion of this babe—poverty the half-sister of Death. The father struggled as best he could. At last overcome, poor man, with misfortunes, he died, aged 63, leaving nothing except the memory of an upright man. This poor boy Robert attended school a little, a very little, down at the old Alloway Mill. He was taught a little by John Murdoch; a little by his father. That was his education—with this exception that whenever nature produces a genius the old mother holds him close to her heart, and whispers secrets to his ear that others cannot win in any university in the world.

That is the way it is.

In the year 1759 Scotland was emerging from the darkness, from the gloom and sorrow of Calvinism. The attention of the people had gradually been drawn from the other world—or rather from the other two worlds—to this world. The commercial spirit, the interests of trade, were weaning men from the discussion of predestination, damnation and the secret decrees of God. The influence of the clergyman, whose influence had been enormous, was gradually diminishing, and the beggarly elements of this life were beginning to attract the attention of the Scotch. The people of Scotland at the time were rather poor. They had made but little progress in art and science, and the same is true of the rest of the world. They had been engaged for many years in fighting for what they called their political or

theological rights, or to destroy the rights of others. They had great energy, great natural sense and courage, great intellectual animus. I must say they had courage without limit, and it may be well enough to add that they were as obstinate as they were undoubtedly brave.

Several countries have had a metaphysical peasantry. Switzerland had one; men discussing on the eternal decrees, endeavouring to unravel the infinite puzzle, talking of foreordination, predestination and the saints and all that sort of thing. Holland had a metaphysical peasantry that also discussed foreordination. Scotland had a metaphysical peasantry, men living in thatched cottages, discussing about the will of the Creator, what he intended to do, and in their efforts to harmonize his goodness with having made such a climate as there was in Scotland they had a pretty time of it. We also had a metaphysical peasantry in New England, and there while they were whipping Quakers and persecuting others they were discussing those questions of foreordination and predestination and the perseverance of the saints, that is to say, the five points of Calvinism. They were a very smart, sharp people, and they sharpened their minds with these questions. For many years the Scotch had been ruled by the clergy. You would not think it possible for the clergy to rule the Scotch. You would not think it possible for one Scotchman to rule another if you ever got acquainted with two Scotchmen.

And yet it is true that the clergy had a wonderful influence in Scotland, and why? It so happened that the religion of Scotland became so mixed and mingled with patriotism, or the love of Scotland, that those who loved Scotland took the side of the Scotch kirk. If any other country and any other religion attacked Scotland and its religion the result was that Scotland and the religion went into partnership. And in that way the clergy had an immense influence on that country. This of course drew the priest and the people together, and the priest naturally took advantage of the situation. They not only determined upon the religious path to be pursued by the people, but they went into every detail of life, and there never was established in the



world a more dreadful tyranny than that of the Scotch kirk. They gravely discussed the question whether it was right for a father to endeavour to save his son from drowning who had fallen into the water on Sunday. When the Scotch church had anathematized a child, the question was whether the mother had a right to feed that boy. And it was decided that she had not.

Why, do you know, they executed a poor fellow about the end of that century for having wished that he was in hell, in order that he might get warm, and for having added, that in his judgment Moses was a sleight-of-hand performer.

Still the spirit of trade was growing. The merchant drives out the missionary, and always has, everywhere. That is the reason that the man who has something to sell will always beat the gentleman who has something to give, or that he pretends to give. At that time in Scotland a few men had become famous. David Hume, one of the sublimest of men; a great man, a serene man, one who, had he lived in the olden time would have stood side by side with Zeno; a great man of whom Scotland will be prouder as the years go by, and as Scotland gets more and more civilized. Then there was Ramsay, Reid, Robertson, Beattie, and many others. But the great bulk of the Scotch people at that time were orthodox in every drop of their blood.

It was a Scotch-woman who, on being asked, "Auntie, do you really believe in the doctrine of total depravity?" answered: "I do, I do." "And do you think," he said, "it is a good doctrine?" "Yes I do, and I think it is a great pity that more don't live up to it." They were orthodox and they stood by the doctrine. Why in those blessed days before communion Sunday they would often meet on Friday and have three sermons, three on Saturday and four on Sunday and wind up with a kind of Gospel spree on Monday. They loved it. I think it was Heinrich Heine who said, "It is not true, it is not true that the damned in hell are compelled to hear all the sermons preached on earth." He says this is not true. This shows that there is some mercy even in hell.

Sometimes I have thought that the Scotch

were saved from the gloom of Calvinism by intoxicating liquors. I think there is something in it. It may be John Barleycorn really saved the Scotch from the divine dyspepsia of Calvinism. I really think there must be something in it. I believe the Puritan was saved from his religion by rum. Had there been no rum in New England they would have been persecuting Quakers there even unto this day. So I think schnapps must have saved Holland; and yet in spite of Calvinism, in spite of the mists and fogs, and in spite of the abominable winters of Scotland, that country produced the sweetest and tenderest song of all the world, and the greatest and noblest of our singers, the one who gave us the greatest and noblest song, and that was Robert Burns.

Robert Burns was a child of the people. I am glad of it. Robert Burns was a peasant, a ploughman, and yet a poet.

And why is it that millions and millions of men and women love this man? Why is it? He was a Scotchman, and all the tendrils of his heart struck deep in Scotland soil. He voiced the ideals of the best and greatest of his race, and of his blood. He was patriotic to the last fibre, and yet he is as dear to the citizens of the great Republic as to Scotia's sons and daughters. And why? We, of course, admit that all great poetry has a national flavour. It tastes of the soil. No matter how great it is, how wide, how universal, the flavour of locality is never lost. We love Burns because he made common life beautiful, because he idealized sun-burned girls who worked in the field, because he put honest labour above titled idleness, because he made the cottage far more poetic than the palace, because he painted the simple joys and ecstasies and raptures of sincere love, and because he put native common sense, above the culture of students. We love him because he was independent, sturdy, self-poised, social, generous, thrilled by a look, by a touch, full of pity, carrying the sorrows of others in his heart, those even of enemies; hating to see anybody suffer, lamenting the death of everything, even of trees and flowers. We love him because he was a natural democrat, and because he hated tyranny in every form. We love him because he was always



on the side of the people, and felt the throb of progress.

We know that he read but little. He had but few books, had but little of what we call education, only an outline of history, a little philosophy, none possibly in the highest sense, his library consisting of but a very few volumes, among them Stackhouse's "History of the Bible," one play of Shakespeare's that Shakespeare did not write, and the poems of Ossian written by another man. Burns, however, was a man of genius. This is why we love him. He did not have to read much.

A man of genius is something like a spring, something that suggests no labour. A spring bubbling from the earth seems to be a perpetual free gift of nature. There is no thought of toil. The water comes flowing over the white pebbles and comes without effort, no machinery, no pipes, no engines, no waterworks, nothing that suggests expense or trouble or a mortgage, (laughter) and so a natural poet, it won't do to compare him with the educated, with the polished and with the industrious. He is a spring. And Burns seems to have done everything without effort. His poems wrote themselves. He was overflowing with sympathies and ideas and suggestions on every subject, but there is no midnight oil, there is nothing in him of the student; there is no suggestion of one of his poems having been re-written or re-cast. No trouble. There is in his heart a poetical April and May, and all the poetic seeds burst into sudden life. In a moment the seed is a plant, the plant is a blossom, and the fruit is given to the world. He looks at everything from a natural point of view, and he had the sense to write about men and women with whom he was acquainted. He cared nothing for mythology, nothing for the legends of the Greeks and Romans. He drew nothing from history. Everything he speaks about was within his reach, and he knew it from centre to circumference, all his figures and comparisons perfectly natural.

He does not endeavour to make angels of fine ladies. He takes the servant girls with whom he is acquainted, the dairy maids whom he knows, and he puts wings on those servants and on those dairy-maids, and makes them angels that the angels themselves would be

envious of. That is what Robert Burns did. He did not make women of goddesses, but he made goddesses of women. This man, so natural, keeping his cheek so close to the breast of nature, never thought that Pope and Churchill and Thomson were poets. Some things we cannot account for. His first poem was addressed to the daughter of the blacksmith. Next he was in love with Ellison Begbie—offered her his heart and hand, and was refused. She was a servant working in a family. Jean Armour, his wife, was a daughter of a tailor, and her father objected to his daughter, being a daughter of a respectable tailor, uniting herself in marriage with Robert Burns. Highland Mary was a servant, a milk-maid. Burns, as I say, did not make women of goddesses, but he made goddesses of women. After all, the highest art keeps close to the ground. If you want to be sublime, cling to the grass. There never was a picture painted of a palace that was poetic. A palace suggests weariness, and pomp, and circumstance and responsibility. If you want that which is poetic you must paint a cottage with climbing vines, with trees in bloom, with bees that make their singing journeys around the house, with children natural. The simple, necessary things of life are always poetic. Take for instance one of the books of the Bible. The Songs of Solomon. They believed for many years that Solomon wrote that song, but the moment I read it I knew he did not, and I know now that he did not. And I will tell you why. Solomon was king, and in the song he praises the palace. He dwells on the delights of the king's chambers. Now that was written by a peasant, who believed that the palace was filled with joy. Had it been written by a king, one who knew better, he would have had happiness in the cottage, in the field, under the arching vine. And if you read Solomon's song some time, if you have time to waste, you will find that I am right on that subject. Fine ladies robed in jewels are not poetic. Never. They are artificial, but not artistic. After all, art is the highest possible expression of the natural. It must not suggest labour or toil or trouble or responsibility. It must suggest liberty and freedom.

Burns, above all things—and that is why



we love him, maybe—was the poet of love. To him woman was divine, and in the light in her eyes this peasant stood transfigured. Love changed this ploughman to a king. The plaid became a robe of purple. The poor man became the poet and the labourer was the ennobled man who stood like a descended God. In his "Vision" his native muse tells the story of his conversion and how he came to write. Was there ever a sweeter singer? Will there ever be a sweeter song written than "Bonnie Doon," and there is in it too a wealth of philosophy. A poor broken-hearted girl wandering by a stream says to the bird: "Thou'lt break my heart, thou bonnie bird."

There is an idea that when the weather is bad, when it is overcast, when all is gloom, that then the heart of man cannot bear its trouble as it can in the sunshine. That is a mistake. By far the greater number of suicides are committed when the sun shines, and when all is life and gaiety in the world, and the poor wretch, with such rack and ruin in his heart, compares the sunshine of the earth with the darkness within, and the contrast he cannot bear. Burns understood that philosophy long before the statistics had verified the fact.

It would consume days to give you, to go over those tender lines, lines wet with the heart's blood, lines that throb and thrill, lines that glow like flame—lines full of love and and death, the beautiful, the sublime, the pathetic; but the most beautiful love poem that I know, that I have ever read, one pure as the tear of gratitude, is to "Mary in Heaven." Had Burns written nothing else, every man who has ever loved woman would keep the name of Burns within his heart.

Above all of Scotland's queens rises this pure and gentle girl made deathless by the love of Robert Burns.

A ploughman and a servant, a peasant and a milkmaid, the two most royal children that Scotland boasts; royal because upon the brow of the peasant is the laureled crown, and in the hand of the milkmaid is the sceptre that stirs all hearts. Burns was also a poet of home, the poet of the fireside, of father and mother and child, and all the purest that is in wedded life. In the

"Cottar's Saturday Night," one of the noblest and sweetest poems in the literature of our world is a description of the cottar going home from his labours, and it is a great picture that will live as long as language lives. And in the same poem is described the courtship. It is lovely, beautiful. Where is there in this world a more beautiful and more touching picture than that of the old couple sitting on the ingleside with clasped hands? There never will be a greater poem upon this subject than "John Anderson, my Jo." Burns taught that love of wife and child was the highest kind of love, and the noblest. Burns finally sums up what you would call the whole duty of man in four lines in one of his letters to Dr. Blacklock. To make a happy fireside was the highest aim in human life.

To mak a happy fireside clime for weans and wife,  
That's the true pathos and sublime o' human life.

I wish that had been written in stone.

Burns had another art, the art of stopping; the art of stopping at the right place. Nothing is more difficult than this. It is very hard to end a play. It is very hard to get the right kind of roof on a house. There is not one story-teller in a thousand that knows just the place where the rocket ought to explode. They go on talking after the stick has come down.

Burns wrote short poems, and why? All poems are short. There cannot be a long poem any more than there can be a long joke. Burns knew when to stop. I believe the best example of an ending perfectly accomplished you will find in his "Vision." There comes into his house, into that auld clay biggin', his muse, the spirit of a beautiful woman, and tells him what he can do, and what he can't do as a poet. He conversed with her; he has a long talk with her and now the thing is how to get her out of the house. You may think that is an easy thing. It is easy enough to get yourself into difficulty, but not to get out. But I was struck with the beautiful manner in which Burns got that angel out of the house. "And like a passing thought she fled, in light away." That is the way he got her out of the house.

Burns above all that I know was a poet of



friendship. "Should auld acquaintance be forgot." Wherever those who speak the English language assemble, wherever the Anglo Saxon people meet with clasp and smile, "Auld Lang Syne" will tremble in the happy air. And it is never to be forgotten.

Burns was the friend of the merry meeting. He has written the best drinking songs ever written by mortal man, and say what we will against intemperance, say what we will against alcohol, I feel towards it somewhat as Burns did towards the devil, that he had some good sides. It is somewhat difficult to be exceedingly sociable on cold water. There does go with wine, there does go I say with that, a certain good-fellowship, a certain flow of thought, a certain amplitude of feeling. Nothing else can produce it so far as I know, and there never was a people on the earth that could pass the cup or glass with a more delightful smile than the sons of Scotland. Burns was the poet of a good Scotch drink. And it is somewhat wonderful a man said to me to-night: "No nation has ever amounted to anything without they drank a good deal." All these temperance nations, he says, have gone backwards. Well you can study that out for yourself. But I do think that the little old song of "Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut" is the best drinking song that was ever written. And, do you know, I went down to that place where "Willie brewed the peck o' maut" and I felt like taking a drink myself, when I read that drinking song of Burns:

"We are na fou; we're no that fou,  
But just a drappie in our e'e;  
The cock may craw, the day may daw,  
But aye we'll taste the barley bree."

There is no better drinking song than that in the world, and I would have liked to have been there that night.

I have a good notion to tell you something. Not long ago I was dining with some gentlemen, and next me sat a minister. He was bound to get into good company for once in his life. He was talking a little on the subject of religion, and I finally asked him, "Now," said I, "you have talked so much about the apostles and the Lord, and all that sort of thing; now will you be honour bright with me and answer me a question?"

Well, "If I tell you, you won't tell on me will you?" Well, I said, "I know what your answer is then, because, if you had been going to say one of the apostles, you never would have told me not to tell."

Burns knew that poets could not be made. He knew that education had nothing to do with genius. He knew the university could not furnish capacity nor genius, it could not furnish that divine atmosphere.

Besides this, Burns was a very great artist. He has painted some of the most wonderful word pictures in the human language. His description of a brook in "Hallowe'en" is one of the most exquisite things that has ever been my good fortune to read.

"Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,  
As thro' the glen it wimpl't;  
Whyles round a rocky scar it strays:  
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;  
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,  
Wi' bickerin', dancin' dazzle;  
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,  
Below the spreading hazel,  
Unseen that nicht."

Just read that over to yourselves some day five or six times. All his work is of this character, so beautiful, so simple, and so natural. It is splendid. Take the picture in Highland Mary. He pictures love in the breast of a sweet girl. It is beautiful. Think too of his description at the commencement of his vision. That shows his descriptive powers at their very best, and proves what a true poet this man is.

There is another reason why we love Robert Burns. He is a democrat of the right kind. He was in every fibre of his being a sincere democrat, and not for the sake of revenue. He was a believer in the people, and in the sacred rights of man. He believed that honest peasants were superior to titled parasites. He knew the so-called gentry of his time. In one of his letters to a friend he says it takes a few dashes into the world to give a young man a proper, decent regard for the poor insignificant devils of mechanics and peasantry. He understood the gentry. He knew the crushing spirit of caste, the infernally cruel spirit of caste, the spirit that despises the useful; and that depreciates the work of the toiler, those who bear the burdens of this world.



Burns rebelled against the injustice of his time, against the artificial distinctions among men. His loyal soul broke out in that magnificent protest which took the form of what is, perhaps, the greatest of all his poems, "A man's a man for a' that."

Every line of that poem came throbbing with life from his great heart, and since that poem has been written there has been more manhood in the world. Men have been prouder of their hearts and of themselves, without taking into account whether they were clothed in robes or rags.

If there is anything nobler in our language, I have never read it. No grander Declaration of Independence was ever given to the world. It is the apotheosis of independence since it was written. It is a forerunner of that very day when men will be brothers the world over.

Burns was not only a poet, not only the poet of love and friendship, not only an artist, and not only a democrat, but in heart he was a theologian. He had theology too. He was superior in heart and brain to the theologians of his time. He knew that the creed of John Calvin was cruel and absurd, and he attacked it with all his might and main. He was not awed by the clergy, and he cared but very little for authority. He insisted on thinking for himself. Sometimes he may have faltered a little, fearing that some friend of his might take offence. Sometimes he would say or write a word or two in favour of the Bible, and sometimes he addressed the Kirk in words of scorn. But there is one thing he did that I like, perhaps above all—he laughed at the dogma of eternal pain. He knew that if man was to suffer forever that God must be a dreadful tyrant, a monster. The dear old doctrine that man is totally depraved he threw aside. He refused absolutely to receive it.

He understood the hypocrites of his time. "They tak' religion in their mouth," says he. Can you conceive what a detestation he had of hypocrites? The strongest thing that was ever written against Calvinism is "Holy Willie's Prayer." In this poem you will find the Calvinistic creed stated with perfect fairness and accuracy. In this poem Burns nailed Calvinism to the cross. He put it on the rack and burned it to the stake.

In 1787 Burns, being still a theologian, he made some slight concessions in letters written to friends who were of the orthodox faith. These must have been written in the spirit of flattery. It is not for me to say exactly what Burns believed. I am going to let *him* say it: "An honest man has nothing to fear." That is pretty good doctrine, no matter whether he believes in the Bible or not. If that part of us called mind does survive, then I say: "Away with the old-wife prejudices and doctrines."

Burns' religion was of the same stamp as that of Voltaire, of Thomas Jefferson, of Thomas Paine and of Abraham Lincoln.

Burns also said another thing in which there is a vast amount of wisdom, when he asks this question: "Why has a religious turn of mind always a tendency to narrow and harden the heart?"

A little while ago one of the greatest poets died, and I was reading one of his volumes, and at the same time during the same period reading a little from Robert Burns, and the difference between these two men struck me so forcibly that I concluded to say something about it to-night. Tennyson was a piece of rare china decorated by the highest art. Burns was made of honest human clay moulded by sympathy and love. Tennyson dwelt in his fancy for the most part with kings and queens, with lords and ladies, and with counts and nobles. Burns lingered by the firesides of the poor and humble, in the thatched cottage of the peasant. He loved men and women, and without regard to the outlook. Tennyson was touched by place and birth, and by the insignia given by birth and chance of fortune. As he grew old he grew narrower, and less in touch with the world around him. Tennyson was ingenious, Burns ingenuous. Tennyson had intellectual taste, Burns' brain was the servant of his heart. One was exclusive, and the other pressed the world against his breast. Burns was touched by wrongs and injustice. Tennyson touched art on many sides, writing no doubt of lordly things, dealing with the vast poesies of his brain, and he satisfied the taste of cultured men. Tennyson is always self-possessed. He possesses in abundance poetic sympathy, but lacks the fire and the flame. Burns dwells



on simple things, on things that touch the heart and arouse the highest sympathies of men. The religion of Burns was great enough to include everything. Tennyson's imagination lived in a palace. The imagination of Burns dwelt lower down, among the people; his heart went out to them, and he recorded the poems of their simple life in an imperishable verse. His songs were sweet harmonies drawn from the breast of nature.

Tennyson, as I say, satisfied in many ways the tastes of cultured men, and he is always perfectly self-possessed. From his heart there emanates no burst of song that thrills and inspires. No one ever thinks of him as having been carried away by stormy feelings, but as a great artist he has a claim, an undisputed claim, to a high place in the world of letters. Burns dealt with simple things, with those that touch the heart of the husband and wife, the mother and the pure young girl. He spoke of the common things, of life and love and death, and joy and hope. His sympathies were in accord with the hearts of his fellow men. Both men were great poets. Tennyson appealed to the intellectual in his readers, Burns to the tenderest feelings of the soul. Men admire Tennyson. Men love Robert Burns.

Sometimes the outspoken expression of the poet, the impulses of his heart, made him enemies. He made enemies because he sympathized with the French revolution, and because he was glad that the American colonies had become a nation. At a banquet once, being asked to drink the health of Pitt, Burns said: "I will give you a better toast—George Washington." A little while after, when they wanted him to drink to the success of the English arms, Burns said: "No; I will drink this: May their success equal the justice of their cause." He sent three or four little cannon to the French convention, because he sympathized with the French revolution, and because of these little things, his love of liberty, of freedom and justice, at Dumfries he was suspected of being a traitor, and, as a result of these trivial things, as a result of that suspicion, Burns was obliged to join the Dumfries volunteers. And thereby hangs a tale. He had to buy a uniform, which he bought on credit—seven

pounds. It was bought from Matthew Pen, and afterwards when he was sick, nigh unto death, when he had to be taken to the shore of the sea, Matthew Pen insisted on putting his emaciated body into jail for the money expended by Burns for the uniform in which to join the Dumfries volunteers, to prove that the man who wrote "Scots Wha Hae," was not a traitor. The last work he ever did in his life was to write two letters, one to a cousin to send him a few pounds to save him from the horrors of a jail. He came back to Dumfries a dying man, and for a few days longer, the brief space of time that he lived, all that time his brain was troubled with that claim of Matthew Pen. When he was dying, the very last words uttered by Robert Burns, with the vision of a jail in his mind, the last words that came from his lips were these: "That damned scoundrel, Matthew Pen." And when a few days before, knowing that he was to die, he begged that the awkward squad, meaning the Dumfries Volunteers, should not be allowed to fire over his grave, we have a true insight into what his feelings were. But they fired. They were bound to fire or die.

How that man rose above all his fellows in death! Do you know, there is something wonderful in death. What a repose! What a piece of sculpture! The common man dead looks royal, a genius dead, sublime.

Then a few years ago I visited all the places where Burns had been, from the little house of clay with one room where he was born, to the little house with one room where he now sleeps, I thought of this. Yes, I visited them all, all the places made immortal by his genius, in the field where love first touched his heart, in the field where he ploughed up the home of the mouse. I saw the cottage where Robert and Jean first lived as man and wife and walked on "the banks and braes of bonnie Doon," and all the other places rendered immortal by his genius, and when I stood by his grave I said: This man was a great man. He was a radical. This man believed in the dignity of labour, in the nobility of the useful. This man believed in human love, in making a heaven here, in judging men by their deeds instead of by their wealth and title. This man believed in



a pure heart and soul, and in the liberty of the soul, the liberty of thought and speech. This man believed in the rights of individual, the sacred rights of individual independence. This man sympathized with the suffering and oppressed. This man had the genius to change suffering and sorrow into song, to enrich poverty and make it blessed to be poor, to fill the lives of the lowly with love and light. This man had the genius to make robes of glory out of squalid rags. The name of Robert Burns can never die. He is enrolled among the immortals and will live forever. This man left a legacy of riches untold, not only to Scotland but the whole world. He enriched our language and among succeeding generations with a generous hand he has scattered the gems of thought. His heart blossomed in a thousand songs, songs for all times and all seasons, suited to every experience of the heart and to every phase of thought; songs for the dawn of life, songs for the cradle, songs for growing boy and girlhood, songs for the hour of courtship and for the sweet and sacred relationship of man and wife; songs for the cheerless and the friendless, songs of hope for the despairing, songs of love for the unloved, songs of joy for the joyless, songs for the vanished days, and songs that were filled

with light and hope for days to come; songs for the sunshine and for the storm, songs that set the pulses throbbing and stir the heart of man.

And when I was at his birth-place, at that very little clay house where he was born, standing in that sacred place, I wrote these lines:

“ Though Scotland boasts a thousand names,  
Of patriot, king and peer,  
The noblest, grandest of them all,  
Was loved and cradled here.  
Here lived the gentle peasant prince,  
The loving cottar king,  
Compared with whom the greatest prince  
Is but a titled thing.

’Tis but a cot roofed in with straw,  
A hovel made of clay;  
One door shuts out the snow and storm,  
One window greets the day;  
And yet I stand within this room,  
And hold all thrones in scorn;  
For here beneath this lowly roof  
Love’s sweetest bard was born.

Within this hallowed hut I feel  
Like one who clasps a shrine,  
When the glad lips at last have touched  
The something deemed divine.  
And here the world through all the years,  
As long as day returns,  
The tribute of its love and tears,  
Will pay to Robert Burns.”

#### IV.—PRINCE AND PEASANT.

BY ROBERT HOGG.

LANGSYNE, upo’ a simmer day,  
A King had got an heir,  
An’ lords an’ ladies gleg an’ gay  
Brocht hansels rich an’ rare.  
An’ princes prood frae owre the main  
Were brocht “the prince” to see—  
King, prince and coort, are langsyne gane,  
An’ lost to memorie.

When Jan’wur win’s blew bleak through Ayr,  
In a wee cot ae morn  
Some twa-three neebours gathered were  
To see a wean new-born.

It didna witch the warld’s ear,  
’Twas but a peasant’s birth—  
Noo that wean’s name frae year to year  
Gangs circlin’ roon the earth.

The prince, wha’s life did thus begin,  
’Mang ploys whilk maun hae deeved,  
Some doot if there wis sic a ane,  
Some sweer he never leeved.  
The bairn born i’ that but-an-ben,  
’Mang cauld an’ cranreuch care,  
Wha sae unblest as no’ to ken  
The Daithless Bard o’ Ayr?



## V.—THE BURNS STATUE IN ABERDEEN.

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THE Burns statue for Aberdeen was formally unveiled yesterday afternoon, September 15th, 1892, by Professor Masson, Edinburgh, in presence of about 6000 onlookers. The statue, which has been erected on a prominent site in Union Terrace, was successfully placed on the pedestal on Tuesday afternoon, and all who have seen it agree that it is an excellent piece of sculpture, and a credit to the artist, Mr. Henry Bainsmith, formerly of Aberdeen, and now of London. The monument is the gift, to the town, of admirers of the poet, and is a distinct addition to the artistic features of Union Terrace, and to the amenity of the locality generally. Opposite the statue a raised platform was erected, where those specially invited to witness the unveiling ceremony were accommodated. The platform presented a beautiful appearance, being covered with crimson cloth, and hung with gaily-coloured flags. From the upper windows of the Conservative Club were displayed three large banners. The statue was draped with the Union Jack, attached by cords to a flagstaff behind, to aid the operation of unveiling. To the end of the unveiling cord was affixed a tassel of chaste design. The tassel, which was of solid silver, was—a most fitting emblem for such a ceremony—in the shape of a Scotch thistle. On one side were engraved the Bon-Accord Arms, while the other bore the following inscription :—

To

PROFESSOR MASSON, OF EDINBURGH,  
As a souvenir of his unveiling  
THE BURNS STATUE AT ABERDEEN,  
on 15th September, 1892.

The members of the Burns Committee met in the Palace Hotel at a quarter before two o'clock, amongst those present being Bailie Mearns, Dr. Alexander, Mr. William Carnie, Mr. James Davidson, Mr. John Bruce, Dr. James Moir, Mr. Peter Crombie, Mr. William Henderson, Devanha House; Treasurer Morgan, Dean of Guild Walker, Mr. William Cadenhead, Mr. William Pyper of Hillhead; Mr. J. H. Bisset, Mr. G. W. Wilson, Mr.

James M'Intosh. Professor Masson, along with Mrs. Masson, Professor Niven, Mrs. Niven, and the Misses Stewart, Banchory House, arrived at the hotel a few minutes before two o'clock. A start was soon afterwards made for Union Terrace. In the meantime the platform was well filled. Lord Provost Stewart—whose guest Professor Masson is—and the Magistrates and members of the Town Council were mostly all present, together with a full representation of the members of the Burns Committee and subscribers to the fund generally. Outside the enclosed area a large and interested crowd assembled, and much enthusiasm was manifested. Mr. Mann's new Grand Hotel seemed a favourable point from which to view the ceremony, and every spot from which a glimpse could be got of the statue and of the platform was fully occupied. Professor Masson, took up a position at the top of the stairway, along with Lord Provost Stewart, Sir William Geddes, Dr. Bain, and Mr. Forbes Robertson. The car and vehicular traffic in Union Terrace was stopped, and Chief Constable Wyness marched a large body of police to the ground. Lord Provost Stewart, who wore his chain of office, called at once upon the chairman of the Burns Committee,

Bailie MEARNs, who was received with cheers, and who said—The duty which it has fallen to me to perform is an exceedingly pleasing one—to introduce to you Professor Masson, who has so kindly acceded to our request to come and unveil the statue of Scotland's greatest Son of Song, Robert Burns. Professor Masson is no stranger to Aberdeen. He is not only a true son of Bon-Accord, but an honour to our country. After finishing his education at Marischal College and Edinburgh University, he became, at the early age of 19, editor of a Scotch provincial newspaper, and three years afterwards migrated to London, contributing to "Fraser's Magazine" and the other periodicals of that date. A year afterwards, he is found again in the metropolis of Scotland,



and for a couple of years was engaged in literary work for the Messrs. Chambers in their magazine. He then returned to London and resumed his avocations as a *litterateur*, and in 1852 was appointed to the professorship of English Language and Literature in the University College of London. When "Macmillan's Magazine" was started in 1859, Professor Masson was its first editor, and contributed largely to its earlier numbers: notably a series of sketches which appeared in '63, '64, and '65, on "Dead Men I Have Known; or, Recollections of Three Cities—Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and London," giving, so far as Aberdeen is concerned, vivid sketches of such notable men as Dr. Kidd, Dr. Melvin, of Grammar School celebrity; Dr. Knight, of Marischal College; Robertson of Craigdam, and Thom, the Inverurie poet. In 1865 he was elected Professor of English Literature in the University of Edinburgh on the death of Professor Aytoun. But ladies and gentlemen, it is principally as an author that Professor Masson is known. His "Life of Milton and the History of his Time," the most authoritative work on this subject yet published, occupied twenty years of his otherwise busy life; the first of the six volumes appearing in 1857 and the last in 1880. He has also edited Milton's poetical works, with introductory notes and essay, which has been reproduced in the "Golden Treasury" and "Globe" Series. His essays, biographical and critical, chiefly on the English poets, and his Edinburgh sketches and memories, published so recently as May last, consisting of delightful and brilliant reminiscences of the past history of Edinburgh, and accounts of some of its literary residents, such as Allan Ramsay, Lady Wardlaw, the Baroness Nairne, Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Walter Scott, John Hill Burton, and Dr. John Brown, and his many other works, all testify to the true worth of the man. He was the intimate acquaintance and friend of Carlyle, whose essay on Burns is unquestionably the best yet written of him in whose honour we meet to-day; and quite recently he was selected to unveil the bust of that great master mind in the Wallace Monument. Your committee, in looking around for some one to unveil the statue of Burns, hit on the worthy Professor, who at once

kindly agreed to their request, and is now in our midst for that purpose. Having now formally introduced him, I have to ask him to perform the ceremony of unveiling and handing over to the city the statue of the Prince of Scottish Song—(loud cheers).

#### THE CEREMONY.

The unveiling was then, amid enthusiastic cheers, performed by Professor Masson. The cord which Professor Masson pulled did not seem particularly strong, and gave way to slight pressure. Some laughter was occasioned, which, however, was immediately afterwards turned into cheers when the Union Jack slipped from the monument, and the Scottish Standard ran up on the flagstaff behind. The crowd had been growing greatly in numbers, and the whole line of Union Terrace was densely crowded.

Professor MASSON, speaking amid cheers, said—"The world is really served only by the *extraordinary*." Such is one of the sayings of a man reputed among the wisest of modern times; and, like every other of his sayings, it is deeply considered, and hits the nail on the head. It means, or implies, that all those men who are remembered as having served the world greatly and conspicuously in any department of its affairs have been men who, somehow, have burst previous bounds. If this is true of any one on the list of the famous dead, it is certainly true of him in honour of whose memory we are now assembled:—

"There was a lad was born in Kyle;  
But whatna day or whatna style  
I doubt it's hardly worth the while  
To be sae nice wi' Robin.

Our monarch's hindmost year but ane  
Was five and twenty days begun;  
'Twas then a blast o' Janwar' win'  
Blew hansel in on Robin.

The gossip keekit in his loof;  
Quo' scho,—'Wha lives will see the proof;  
This waly boy will be nae coof:  
I think we'll ca' him Robin.

He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',  
But aye a heart aboon them a';  
He'll be a credit to us a';  
We'll a' be proud o' Robin."

Burns was extraordinary, we may say in the first place, in that he burst the bonds of



his time in the poetry of the British Islands. It is now a commonplace in our histories of British Literature that the century or so that followed the death of Milton was, with some exceptions, a period of abeyance throughout the British Islands of all genuine poetry of the higher order, and even of the very notion of what genuine and high poetry is, and that the revival both of the notion and of the thing must date from the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when Cowper and Crabbe had appeared, and Wordsworth was about to present himself. Well, so far as we may accept this view, it is Burns that has to be pointed to as the Scottish coadjutor of Cowper and Crabbe, and the Scottish predecessor of Wordsworth, in this great revival. Nay, if Wordsworth himself is to be the authority, Cowper and Crabbe must drop out of the account, in comparison with Burns. It was not either Cowper or Crabbe that Wordsworth acknowledged as his real predecessor and inspirer, but the Scottish ploughman-poet. Wordsworth had read the poems of Burns on their first appearance, and their effects upon him had been such that, when he heard the news, ten years afterwards, of Burns's death, he felt, he tells us, as if he had lost an elder brother :—

“ I mourned with thousands, but as one  
More deeply grieved ; for he was gone  
Whose light I hailed when first it shone  
And showed my youth  
How Verse may build a princely throne  
On humble truth.”

In other words, it was Burns that had first given Wordsworth the conception of that species of poetry which he had vowed to spend all his own future life in exemplifying and expounding to the English nation,—the poetry, as he defined it, of a return to the elemental in matter, and to the natural in language, after long and vicious perseverance in the merely artificial and conventional, and of a preference, in that interest, for themes taken from lowly and common life. Burns, without theorising so much about poetry as Wordsworth did, had announced himself in the very character claimed for him by Wordsworth. When, on the impulse of his genius, he had first perceived that poetry was to be his true vocation, a voice within him, he tells us, had warned him thus :—

“ There's ither poets, much your betters,  
Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,  
Hae thocht they had ensured their debtors  
A' future ages :  
Now moths deform in shapeless tatters  
Their unknown pages.”

His reply had been :—

“ Then fareweel hopes o' laurel-boughs  
To garland *my* poetic brows !  
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs  
Are whistlin' thrang,  
And teach the lanely heights and howes  
My rustic sang.”

Herein, were there nothing else, Burns was undoubtedly extraordinary, and did service to correspond. By stepping forth in the guise of a rustic poet writing on homely themes, and for the common people of his own country in their own dialect, but at the same time, and perhaps all the more strikingly by that means, illustrating the necessity and the efficacy of a return to Fact and Nature, and to the intrinsically and universally human, in all poetry whatsoever, he constituted himself, more distinctly than any of his contemporaries, the hinging personality at that epoch or turning-point of British Literary History where the eighteenth century opens into the nineteenth. Burns was extraordinary also in respect of that element of opinion, of thought and reasoning about things in general, which he breathed into his poetry. The testimonies respecting Burns personally that have come down to us from those who knew him well are singularly unanimous in declaring that, even apart from his poetry, he impressed enormously by the general strength and versatility of his intellect. “ The idea which his conversation conveyed of the powers of his mind exceeded, if possible, that which is suggested by his writings,” is the testimony of Dugald Stewart, reiterated by him in the statement : “ All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous.” This, from the eminent and placid philosopher, would have been enough, even if there were not the corroboration furnished by the numerous other descriptions of the living Burns as he moved about among his fellows. Who does not know the essentials of the transmitted portrait,—the strong and massive figure, the swarthy face, the large and glowing eyes, the uncringing manliness



of his demeanour in whatever company, the blazing impetuosity of his address when anger or some other passion roused him and the sorcery and charm of its gentleness at other moments, the rapidity of his changes of mood from the most fervidly earnest to the most extravagantly humorous or the most pathetically tender, and the readiness, eloquence, and pregnancy of his talk in any mood and on any subject? Well, though much of the intellect of Burns, with much of what may be called his creed, has thus been lost by his mere casual distribution of it, right and left, among his familiars and coevals, his principal opinions on not a few subjects are bedded sufficiently in his poetry. In his epistles and satirical poems, more especially, he spoke out his mind very freely on the various questions, social, political, and theological, that were agitating the Scotland of his day. For example,

“There’s a heretic blast has been blawn in the Wast,—  
That what isna sense must be nonsense.”

This is an ironical expression of Burns’s attitude in relation to one particular Scottish controversy of his time; but it is much more. Not only did he himself propagate with all his might the particular “heretic blast” which he describes thus ironically; but, generally and in all matters whatsoever, the substance of his advice to his countrymen consisted in an exhortation to them always to treat as nonsense what they could not rationally interpret into sense. On this account, and the rather because he indicated, boldly enough, what he himself regarded as the forms of nonsense then most current in Scotland, he may be said to have fulfilled for the Scotland of his generation the public function which the Germans describe as that of the “illuminant.” In more than a score of his poems, as you all know, he is seen working vehemently in this function, but most tremendously of all, as you know, in those in which he employs flame as his illuminating agency, and it is against conscious cant and hideous hypocrisy that he directs his blasts. Now, though he may have gone to excess in both the classes of his satirical exposures, whether those in which he merely jetted his wit against what he thought nonsensical, or those in which he

denounced unmercifully what he thought cant and hypocrisy, it cannot be denied, and it is not now denied anywhere, that the service he did for Scottish society and Scottish thought by those exposures was, on the whole, signally beneficial. It may be compared to that sometimes performed by a resolute and energetic physician. Such a physician, visiting a fever-stricken patient in some outlying and single-roomed cottage of his district, finds the hovel, let us say, so dark that he has to grope his way towards the bed, the atmosphere close and fetid, nothing but litter on the floor, and the single window,—or what was once a window, for the panes of glass are gone,—stuffed up with clouts, pieces of old hats, or what not else. Before he has examined the patient, before he has asked a question, what does he do? He goes up to the window, and with his stick, his umbrella, or his fist, he dashes out the stuffing of clouts and shreds of old hat, and lets in air and light. That is what I call a beneficial bursting of bounds; and one of Burns’s fashions of bursting bounds in the Scotland of his time was not unlike. Burns, it has to be added, burst bounds in his own life and conduct. All the world knows *that*, and is agreed, moreover, that it was an illegitimate bursting of bounds, and indefensible. When that has been said and agreed upon, however, what more is needed on the matter at this time of day? We have heard enough and to spare already about the immoralities of Burns, the irregularities of his life; and why go back everlastingly on that subject? The account has been closed, and the subject is outworn. Should anyone, here or there, still persist too pertinaciously in resuscitating it, the Scottish people have made up their minds, the best and saintliest men among them concurring or not dissenting, what to think of that person, and what to say to him. “Who are you that would act the resurrectionist now at *this* grave?” is what they virtually say, and might well say openly: “the real question, sir, is not what *you* think of Burns, but what Burns would have thought of *you*.” In one respect only is there some permanent interest still in the recollection that Burns, besides being extraordinary in better ways, was extraordinary also in this. Part of the value of Burns’s life,



part of its perennial interest, consists in its having been to so large an extent a tragedy ; and it is here, chiefly here, that the tragic element comes in. I never realised this so distinctly, never felt the sadness of Burns's life, and the grandeur of its sadness, so keenly, as I was able to do about three weeks ago, when I visited, almost by accident, the spot of Scottish earth made sacred by his footsteps when he knew himself to be a dying man. On the shore of the Solway Firth, a few miles from Dumfries, is a small hamlet called Brow. It consists of two or three cottages by the side of a country road running parallel to the Firth ; off from which cottages there goes a strip of smooth grassy ground leading to the margin of the Firth itself, also grassy in the main till the sands and ooze are reached, but broken into ridges and dotted with salt hyphen water pools. Close to the cottages, and in the middle of the strip of verdant ground leading from them to the Solway, is a saline well, called "The Brow Well," now a mere muddy splash enclosed within a wall, but still resorted to for its supposed medicinal virtues, and once of greater local fame on that account. It was on the 4th of July, 1796, that Burns, then in the last stage of emaciation and debility, after six months of his fatal illness, harassed for money, and out of countenance with most of his former friends, was taken, by medical advice, from Dumfries to Brow, for such benefit as might still be possible for him from the Brow Well, country air, and sea bathing. For exactly a fortnight he tried the vain experiment ; but on the 18th of July he returned to Dumfries, to die there on the 21st. What a fortnight that, and in what a life ! On the spot itself this feeling came upon me overpoweringly. I saw the humble cottage in which the broken-down invalid was quartered, and, in a corner of the cottage garden, the seat under a thorn tree where he rested his weary frame ; and I paced the promenade of soft green hyphen sward along which he had dragged his tottering limbs seawards, looking out on the Solway and its pools, and taking his farewell of that scene, and of all the rest of the scenery of the world. O, with what meditations in his mind—meditations backwards and meditations forwards ! Forwards, there was the anguish-

ing thought of his wife and children, so poorly provided for, and of what was to become of them after he was gone ; backwards, there was the thought of his own past life—what it had actually been, and in what respects it might have been different. No man ever died, no man ever will die, with a conscience exempting him from the necessity of self-reproach and self-humiliation in such a retrospect ; but the tragic peculiarity in the case of Burns is that here, partly by cruel fate and partly by his own default, the man of most powerful brain and of richest heart in all Scotland was dying ere he had reached the mid-point of his natural life and of its total possibilities. It is a century ago now, all save four years since Burns died, and he seems removed from us, therefore, into a far-off and shadowy past ; but it ought not to be forgotten that he died in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and that, had he lived to the ordinary span of old age, he might have been seen and known in his later days by many still alive, and perhaps by some of ourselves. All the literary remains of Burns are extraordinary individually in their several kinds, or have some touch of the extraordinary. They consist of about 300 songs, about 200 pieces of miscellaneous verse, and a number of roughly-written prose letters ; and they are an inheritance of recognised worth for the whole British Empire. They can be read and enjoyed, to some extent, in England ; and pithy lines and phrases from them have passed into the universal English speech. But, pre-eminently and peculiarly, Burns is the poet of his own Scotland. He seized the Scottish language when it seemed about to become defunct in literature, made it classic once more, and gave it a new lease of life. The poetry of Burns, unlike a good deal of poetry recently written in provincial English dialects, is no mere factitious conversion into a vernacular of what might have been in ordinary English ; it could not have existed in ordinary English, so incorporate is the matter, the thought and feeling, with the vocabulary employed, and even with the Scottish grammatical idiom. Hence the full relish of Burns's most characteristic pieces of the descriptive, narrative, and satirical sorts is reserved for his own countrymen. And



then his songs—those matchless songs of Burns which have been sung now for three generations in Scottish households, are sung there still, and over which Scotsmen in their convivial gatherings anywhere over the earth become tumultuous and ecstatic! The songs and the poems together, it may be doubted whether any poet of any nation since the world began ever sank so deeply and fondly into the hearts and memories of the people of Scotland. He is the supreme poet of Scotland by every claim to that title. He is the poet of Scottish scenery, especially of the scenery of the Scottish Lowlands. He is the poet of Scottish life, Scottish manners, and Scottish humours; and what a range in his poems of this order, from the calm and deep religiousness of his “Cottar’s Saturday Night”—there are some who decry that poem now, God pity them!—to the lawless rollick and daring of his “Jolly Beggars!” He is the poet of all varieties of Scottish sentiment. Take the sentiment of Scottish nationality itself. Is not the Scottish national lyric for all time Burns’s “Scots Wha Hae?” Some critics of late have been sneering even at that lyric, finding fault with it on account of some finical objections to the wording, but in reality disliking the sentiment it would immortalise, and voting it obsolete and barbaric. One must differ here from the critics, whoever they are. The wording of the lyric accords with the sentiment; and both are grand. For the sentiment of Scottish nationality is not something barbaric and obsolete, the poetical expression of which is justifiable only on historical grounds; it exists indestructibly yet among the powers and forces of the present composite and united British body politic, and is capable of services in the affairs of that body politic that may be of incalculable utility even yet. Imagine a Scottish regiment on a foreign battlefield. Imagine it driven back for the moment, foiled, fatigued, and dispirited. “Scots Wha Hae” shouts their commander, or someone else; and no more is needed. They recollect, or half-recollect, the rest:—

“Wha for Scotland’s king and law  
Freedom’s sword will strongly draw,  
Freeman stand or freeman fa’,  
Let him on wi’ me.”

They thrill with that recollection, or half recollection; they rally as they thrill; the Scottish soul returns in them; they face about again; they are unconquerable now; they fight and die like demigods! This is not imagination merely, but verifiable fact; nor is it in such cases only of collective action by Scotsmen that the love of their country is found nerving to higher and still higher exertion. It has this effect among them individually; and Burns himself is an instance. What does he tell us of his resolves and aspirations when he was still but a beardless youth, holding the plough or shearing the corn?—

“Even then a wish I mind its power,  
A wish that to my latest hour  
Shall strongly heave my breast,—  
That I for poor auld Scotland’s sake  
Some usefu’ plan or beuk could make,  
Or sing a sang at least.”

Not to be forgotten in this connection, whatever else must be left unmentioned, is one other sentiment of largemark and consequence which pervades the poetry of Burns no less conspicuously than the sentiment of Scottish nationality, and which it was in fact one of the special achievements of his genius to interlink therewith permanently and indissolubly in the future regards of mankind. It is the sentiment of personal manliness and independence, of the intrinsic spiritual co-equality of all honest human beings, despite their differences of rank and condition. The sentiment had been expressed by others before Burns; but he made it his own, and re-issued it as no mere revolutionary speculation, but the sterling result of his own experience. Born and bred a Scottish peasant himself, knowing the Scottish peasantry thoroughly, and in avowed sympathy all his life with them and with their fellow-myriads whose manual toil upholds the “glittering show” of modern society, he proclaimed, as had never been proclaimed in verse before, the essential human worth that might exist, and did exist, in conjunction with poverty and its extremest hardships, but never ceased, while conveying that message as sternly as he could to those in high places, who seemed to require the information most, to inculcate at the same time on the toiling myriads themselves the doctrine of individual



self-respect, personal integrity at all hazards and to the last gasp, and mutual compassion and helpfulness. If quotations in support of this sentiment of individual manliness are wanted, where are they to be found in such number and variety as in the poetry of Burns? But he was not content that the sentiment should be thus diffused or dispersed through his poetry. As was his fashion, he gathered up and generalised this sentiment also in one immortal lyric :—

“ Is there for honest poverty  
That hangs his head, and a’ that?  
The coward slave, we pass him by :  
We daur be poor for a’ that !  
For a’ that and a’ that,  
Our toils obscure and a’ that,  
The rank is but the guinea’s stamp,  
The man’s the gowd for a’ that.

“ What though on hamely fare we dine,  
Wear hodden grey, and a’ that ?  
Gie fools their silks and knaves their wine,  
A man’s a man for a’ that.  
For a’ that and a’ that,  
Their tinsel show and a’ that,  
The honest man, though e’er so poor,  
Is king o’ men for a’ that.”

It is not for nothing that this lyric, some diluted version of which is now in the poetical repertory of all the European nations, came forth in the Scottish tongue. It may be questioned indeed how far Burns found the sentiment which it expresses Scottish already, and how far he only desired that it should be made Scottish and determined to make it Scottish. Either way, and mainly through Burns, it *is* Scottish now. If manliness is now a reputed Scottish characteristic all the world over, if it is now more disgraceful for a Scotsman than for a native of any other land to be found begging, if the servile and “booming” Scotsman of the older English satirical literature is now on the point of becoming notoriously an extinct animal, to what is this owing so much as to the fame abroad, and the influence within Scotland itself, of Burns’s most sonorous and most impassioned lyric? Burns was once in Aberdeen. It was in September, 1787, when he was in the twenty-ninth year of his age, and in the first flush of his celebrity. He had been on a tour from Edinburgh northwards as far as to Strathbogie and Inverness, and was taking Aberdeen

on his way back. He saw with interest two or three of the then notabilities of the town, and was especially pleased at meeting with young Bishop Skinner, the son of the author of “Tullochgorum;” but the place itself does not seem to have impressed him favourably. “Aberdeen a lazy town,” is the jotting in his diary, as he left it to pass into Kincardineshire and the south. They do not call Aberdeen a lazy town now, nor the Aberdonians a lazy people. They say rather that they are a preternaturally hard headed people, preternaturally cool and cautious, and preternaturally prosaic. “*They say : Quhat say they? Lat them say.*” Hard-headed ! Is soft-headedness a virtue ? Cool and cautious ! That is what is said out of Scotland about the Scots generally ; and inasmuch as the whole history of Scotland contradicts it, and proves that the Scots are a singularly perfervid and tempestuous race, may not any ultra-Scottish degree of coolness and caution, supposed to be discernible among the Aberdonians, consist merely in a power which the Aberdonians have of refraining from showing how fervid and tempestuous they can be till the last possible moment ? Prosaic ! Who was the earliest of known Scottish poets, the very father and beginner of North British Literature, but John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen ; is there not a large volume of collected biographies of “The Bards of Bon Accord ;” and do I not myself remember, as the very type of poetical and musical enthusiasm incarnate, that citizen of Aberdeen, by occupation a tea-dealer, with whom, on several successive nights, about fifty years ago, I walked up and down your lamp-lit and star-lit Union Street long after the clocks had struck twelve, listening to his quotations from Keats, and his ecstasies over the luscious beauties and subtleties of that English poet ? Whether prosaic or not ourselves, we are now paying our tribute to the memory of the man whom we agree with all the rest of Scotland in regarding as our national Scottish poet. In the business of commemoration, as in that of the adjective, there are three degrees. The positive is the print or engraving after an accredited picture ; the comparative is a bust ; the superlative is a statue. In the present instance the Aberdonians have reached the



superlative, and have been satisfied with nothing less. In this, their Granite City, on that north-eastern shore of Scotland which shoulders on the roar of the German Ocean, and is almost the diagonally opposite district of Scotland to that softer south-west where Burns was born and where he lived, they have set up a statue of Burns because they, too, are proud of him; and they have taken care that the statue should be no casual importation, but a specimen of the best work of their foremost Aberdonian sculptor. There it stands in the centre of our city; and, long years hence, after all of us are gone, Aberdonians, old and young, will be passing and repassing it, glancing at it as they pass, and muttering to themselves, as we do now, the magical name of Robert Burns—(prolonged cheers).

Lord Provost STEWART then said—The uppermost thought in my mind at present is how very difficult it must have been for you to sustain your interest—("No, no")—and for Professor Masson to have felt in sympathy with such a large audience, because it is quite impossible that more than a tenth part—barely that—could have heard what he had been saying. But I can assure you that I am perfectly certain of this, and all who have heard him will agree with me when I say that he has delivered one of the most interesting, beautiful, and exquisite addresses regarding Burns—(cheers)—that could possibly have been delivered to us, and I feel, also, certain that when he sees it himself to-morrow in the newspapers, along with us, the

Professor of Literature in Edinburgh University will be pleased with his own production. I am perfectly certain that every one of you will be highly delighted with it—(cheers). Well, I have only to thank him for coming here so kindly, and by that address dedicating this monument to the adornment and embellishment of this city. But my special mission to-day is to thank Bailie Mearns, Dr. Alexander, Mr. Davidson, and all the gentlemen who composed the committee, and who have got up that statue for you; and I am sure that in your name I may return your heartfelt thanks to the committee for the great exertions they have made in collecting money for the statue. It is a statue of which the city will always be proud, and if we have been proud of "Robbie" in the past, we will be still prouder that we have set up a monument like that to his memory—(cheers). I shall only add that the committee have done their work so well that we would like them not to discharge themselves, but to continue in office until they gave us another of Scott—(cheers)—and Chalmers—(cheers)—and of any other national great men that we should commemorate the memory of—(cheers). And I may tell you I do think that Aberdeen is wanting in that respect, and not for want of sentiment either, for I believe we are of all Scots the most perfervid—(hear, hear, and cheers). In the name of this large multitude, I beg to return the very best and most hearty thanks of the community to Bailie Mearns and the rest of the committee.

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## VI.—HOW BURNS WROTE.

"I COMPOSE hastily," said Burns, chatting about his poems with Cromek, "but correct laboriously;" and that sentence condenses all we know of the poet's habits of thought. A trifle set him off, as it did Byron and Wordsworth,—a broken daisy lying in the furrow of his plough, a mouse turned out of its "wee bit housie all in ruin." The picture of a man asking for work, the recollection of an old ballad, a line of Ramsay or Ferguson, or the contemplation of a scene of family worship in the cottage of a peasant. And when the idea

had once sunk in his mind he brooded over it till it took form and shape in a poetic creation. This generally is the history of his poems. His "Address to the Deil," for instance, was suggested, Gilbert tells us, by "running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have from various quarters of this august personage." Reading Ferguson's "Farmer's Ingle," and contemplating the scenes of domestic worship which constitute one of the most characteristic incidents of the cottage life of



Scotland, suggested the "Cottar's Saturday Night." Robert had frequently remarked to him, says Gilbert, "that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase 'Let us worship God,' used by a decent, sober head of a family, introducing family worship." And one Sunday afternoon, when they happened to be walking together, Robert electrified his brother by the recitation of the "Cottar's Saturday Night." Those exquisitely beautiful idyls upon the mountain daisy and the field-mouse are the inspiration of the moment. The dew is still upon them. His gaudeman had, sixty years afterward, a distinct recollection of the poet turning up the mouse. The plough-boy ran after the creature to kill it, but was checked and recalled by his master, who, he observed, thereafter became thoughtful and abstracted. Burns, like the poet of Rydal Mount, held that no poet ever found the muse,

"Till by himself he learned to wander  
Adown some trotting burn's meander,  
And no think lang."

Burns rarely committed his verses to paper till they had been thoroughly conned over in his own mind. "Holding the plough," Gilbert says, "was a favourite situation with Robert for poetic composition, and some of

his best verses were produced while he was at that exercise." But we know, too, from his own confession, how sweet he thought it in the gloaming,

"To stray and pensive ponder  
A heartfelt song."

He composed generally like Wordsworth, without any regular plan. A thought struck him, and if turning over this thought he hit on two or three stanzas to please him, he then cast about for proper introductory, connecting, and concluding stanzas; hence the middle of a poem was often the part to be first produced. But knowing what we do of his conversational powers, and of the terseness, fluency, and felicity of his poetic diction, we should assume for ourselves, without the authority of his "Epistle to Davie," that Burns was rarely at a loss for apt and picturesque expression to clothe his thoughts when his muse was "once fairly het." He frequently had half a dozen or more pieces of one sort and another on hand; a satire, a song, or a pastoral poem, which he took up in turn according to the momentary impulse of his mind, dismissing the work when it bordered on fatigue.

## VII.—MR. WILLIAM WALLACE ON BURNS.

*Address delivered before the Bridgeton Burns Club, January 25th, 1893.*

REPRINTED FROM *THE GLASGOW HERALD*.

IN the course of his preliminary remarks, Mr. Wallace alluded to advices which had recently been offered by certain men of letters to the annual purveyors of the so-called "oratory of the 25th." Maintaining that these advices and that oratory demonstrated the ever-increasing popularity of Burns, he proceeded to say:—The attacks on "the oratory of the 25th" are increasing, because the enthusiasm which leads to that oratory is itself increasing. It takes almost innumerable forms—of fresh investigations into the details of Burns's life, of fresh theories of his poetry, of movements—most valuable movements—for the protection of lovers of his writings from the devices of manuscript forgers, of enormous additions to the lists of Burns

Clubs. We are confronted with the phenomenon—the most extraordinary literary phenomenon of our time—that this man, the centenary of whose death it will be our duty, alas! to celebrate three years and a half hence, is the object of a more widespread admiration, rising almost to worship, than any of his successors in the Three Kingdoms. Which is the reason—the natural and common-sense reason—for this phenomenon? And let us in trying to explain it remember the admirable advice which Lord Beaconsfield—himself, like Burns, a man of action as well as a man of letters—gave to the youth of Glasgow University. He recommended them to be men of their time. Let us, then, try to be men of our time in dealing with this



phenomenon ; if we do, possibly the phenomenon will not appear so very mysterious after all. At all events I venture to think and to say that Burns's enormous and increasing popularity at the present time is due to two not unconnected causes—the fact that no one has superseded him as the poet of men of action, and the companion fact that in spirit, in the range of his subjects, even in style he is—I do not say greater—but more modern than any supremely popular Anglo-Saxon poet that has come after him. I have already alluded to Burns being the favourite poet with men of action belonging to all grades in the social scale ; and need I say more than that he is so in virtue of his having given musical utterance to their loves, their dislikes, their hopes, their ambitions as no other man has yet done? They, like himself, cannot afford to be connoisseurs in life, in love, or in literature. They must take happiness as they find it, they must strike their ethics—nay, their religion in common life—painfully out of the circumstances in which they find themselves. They have tolerance for failings that lean to virtue's side, but nothing but absolute intolerance for cant, insincerity, unreality of all kinds. It is wonderful, therefore, that they should take to their hearts and keep there the poet who gave them the Odyssey of a sensible man's sensible love in the tenderness and humour of "Green grow the rushes, O ;" who never assailed religion or churches, but never hesitated to expose the hypocrisy that sometimes takes the place of the one, or ridicule the fools, fanatics, and pharisees that are still sometimes to be found in the other ; who gave a practical turn to the preaching of the vague but fascinating doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man and the universal sisterhood of women by telling us to "gently scan our brother man, still gentler sister woman," who above all things supplied the business man with a *vade mecum* in—

"Gather gear by ev'ry wile  
That's justified by honour,  
Not for to hide it in a hedge,  
Nor for a train attendant,  
But for the glorious privilege  
Of being independent !"

In dwelling for a moment on the marvellous

modernness of Burns I am not prepared to discuss the question whether, viewed simply as a poet, he is the inferior or superior of his brilliant half-brothers—in revolt against conventionality—Byron and Shelley—much less of Wordsworth or Tennyson, who, although their lives were cast in quieter places than his, understood him thoroughly and loved him tenderly, yet not more tenderly than the simple great ones gone from the United States within living memory—Longfellow and Whittier and Whitman. All that I have to contend for is that Burns was different from his successors, that he touches more closely the realities of common present-day life than they have done, and that in virtue of his doing so his name evokes more general enthusiasm. Take even the apparently small but important and significant matter of style. These are days of hurry, when we have to come to rapid decisions and to express them in pithy language. Literature, if it is to keep itself abreast of the life of the country, must tend to partake more and more of the character of good talk. A direct speaking style is therefore the style of the future, if not of the present. And which of the moderns—for even Tennyson himself gets lost in wandering mazes of metaphysics—has so much of this direct speech as Burns? "There was never a man of letters," says our distinguished fellow-countryman, Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson, "with more absolute command of his means, and we may say of him without excess that his style was his slave." Of this I could give a thousand illustrations—nay, every line I have already quoted is an illustration. But I may give one quotation which not only illustrates Burns's style, but gives expression to a sentiment that is what he himself termed and would have a competent part of his nature.

"Here's freedom to him that wad read,  
Here's freedom to him that wad write :  
There's nane ever feared that the truth should be  
heard  
But them wham the truth would indite."

In these four lines have we not the heart and soul of Milton's "Areopagitica"—perhaps the most daring, dignified, and eloquent piece of argumentation to be found in the whole of the English language? Burns's



direct speaking style is but one evidence of his modernness. Endowed, as I have already said, with the instincts of the man of action, no less than with the instincts of the poet, he threw himself—he could not help throwing himself—into the ecclesiastical and political struggles of his time. He fought the battles of the Moderates. He wrote election ballads. He ate of the forbidden fruit of the French Tree of Liberty. But, being a poet, he saw far beyond the conflicts of his time. He dipped into the future, far as human eye could see. He went straight to the root of every question that he argued; he was never content with skirmishes and affairs of outposts; he must needs make an assault on the citadel. This is certainly not the time or the place to say whether Burns was right or wrong either in his views on the subjects of controversy of which he wrote, or in his forecasts of the political and social future. But I am simply stating historical facts when I affirm that not only was he the pioneer of what for good or evil are styled political and theological Liberalism in Scotland, but that neither the one nor the other has yet found a poetical exponent to supplant him. Then as our trans-Atlantic cousins have admitted, with their wonted heartiness, Democracy, with all its possibilities, perhaps with all its dangers, has not yet got beyond “A man’s a man for a’ that.” And if ever that extension of the modern Gospel of Humanitarianism, whose goal is at present the greatest good of the greatest number of sentient beings, and which has already taken practical shape in Acts for the protection of wild birds and elaborate steps for the prevention of cruelty to animals, safely runs the fire of the ridicule that is the fate of “tenderness over drowning flies,” and reaches the entrenchment of public recognition, whom can it claim as its pioneer and popular poet so truly as the coadjutor of Cowper, the anticipator of Wordsworth, the sensitive heart that despaired with the field-mouse, responded to the terror of the wild-fowl of Loch Turit, limped in all but rhythm with the wounded hare, wept for poor Mailie, and yet smiled amid his tears?

Mr. Wallace, alluding to the present “Highland Mary” controversy, said—The admirers of Burns are not perhaps so ignorant as the

“investigators” think. In regard to this, as to all matters relating to Burns, the golden rule is—Be strong and of good courage. If—and on this point I do not speak altogether without knowledge—any discoverer of any mare’s nest comes forward with the particulars of his find, he will probably discover the admirers of the poet—ay, and the champions of Mary, dear departed, but never to be dishonoured, shade—waiting with equanimity for them and for him. In the course of his subsequent remarks, Mr. Wallace made a reference to the proposed new biography of Burns. He said—Allow me with all due diffidence to make a suggestion. What was Burns doing a hundred years ago, and throughout the last period of his life? He was at once a poet, a patriot, and a practical man, and during his closing years he showed himself to be all three by throwing his labour, without fee or reward, into the great and successful enterprise of consolidating and purifying our national songs. I ask then in one word, cannot we—cannot the Burns Clubs throughout the world—show in turn their gratitude to our national benefactor in a practical fashion by consolidating and purifying Burns biography? Many biographers he has had, everyone of them well-intentioned, many of them painstaking men. But all have been proved to be fallible. Besides, now that we know that the forger has been abroad, what guarantee have we that certain writings, more especially certain letters, which have been attributed to Burns are genuine? Cannot, I say, the Burns Clubs of Scotland organise some committee which would prepare an edition of the authentic works of Burns and a biography, which would not of necessity be long, but would of necessity be final, because it would be based on verified facts? One sees in these days hints thrown out to the effect that the next Exhibition with which this great centre of Scottish life and energy should be identified with ought to be one of Burns manuscripts, relics, and memorabilia generally. That would be a good thing. I have also heard hints of a great National exhibition on similar lines. That would be still better. But even if nothing happens to stimulate our love of Burns, I trust that the three years and a half



which still stand between us and the centenary of Burns's death may be well spent in the preparation of a literary memorial worthy even of him.

In conclusion, Mr. Wallace referred to the action, severely animadverted on by the late Principal Shairp, of certain craniologists who, in 1834, when the mausoleum at Dumfries was opened to admit the remains of the poet's widow, committed the "inhuman outrage" of trying their hats on his skull, to find them "all too little." Not a few critics of Burns's life, and even of his works, he said, have been less reverential and much less candid than the Dumfries craniologists. They seem bent far less on showing his own position in life and literature than in proving that in regard to some particular "bump" his head is not so much developed as this, that, or the other poet's. But this much must be said even for the critics, that such is the position of Burns—the interpenetration of his life and works, his unity in duality—that it is almost impossible to read him at all without unconsciously trying one's hat on his head. No individual critic has yet dared to say that his hat exactly fits that head; no critic will ever dare to say so. For it is the test of a Titan that "the great soul of the world" alone can be both just and generous to him. Finally, and above all things, Burns is and ever will be the special possession of the often mute and inglorious, but often also large-headed, men of action, who may on one side be what

Carlyle terms "mostly fools," but are yet mostly generous, mostly struggling onward and upward, even, it may be, with no clearer rule of conduct than—

"Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die."

To them Burns has given hope, stimulus, musical utterance, a ready reckoner in ethics, a glass in which they may see themselves almost, if not altogether, as others see them. They will not try their own hats on Burns's skull; they have neither time nor inclination to do anything of the kind. They "possess" Burns; he is always with them, like the poor, for whom he has done so much; and it is not criticism, but love, that begins at home. Yet the history of the 96 years that have passed since he died shows that they may very safely be trusted not to allow any really inhuman outrage to be perpetrated on his memory. It is not difficult, indeed, to predict the treatment that will be accorded to its perpetrators—

"By Heavens! the sacrilegious dogs  
Shall fuel be to boil"

the kettle of Scotland's love of Burns! The future may be left to take thought of its duties, and to raise Burns to an even loftier position than he has yet occupied. Confident of that future, therefore, I ask you to drink in solemn silence, but with a full cup and a fuller heart, to the evergreen poet and prophet of Nature and Humanity.

### VIII.—LINES

Read at the Boston Celebration of the Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

How sweetly came the holy psalms  
From Saints and Martyrs down.  
The waving of triumphal palms  
Above the thorny crown.  
The choral praise, the chanted prayers  
From harps by angels strung,  
The hunted Cameron's mountain airs,  
The hymns that Luther sung!  
Yet, jarring not the heavenly notes,  
The sounds of earth are heard,  
As through the open minster floats  
The song of praise and bird!

Not less the wonder of the sky  
That daisies bloom below;  
The brook sings on, though loud and high  
The cloudy organs blow!  
And if the tender ear he jarred  
That, haply, hears by turns  
The saintly harp of Olney's bard,  
The pastoral pipe of Burns.  
No discord mars his perfect plan  
Who gave them both a tongue;  
For he who sings the love of man  
The love of God hath sung!



To-day be every fault forgiven  
 Of him in whom we joy !  
 We take, with thanks, the gold of Heaven  
 And leave the earth's alloy.  
 Be ours his music as of spring,  
 His sweetness as of flowers,  
 The songs the bard himself might sing  
 In holier ears than ours.

Sweet airs of love and home, the hum  
 Of household melodies,  
 Come singing as the robins come  
 To sing in door-yard trees.  
 And, heart to heart, two nations lean,  
 No rival wreaths to twine,  
 But blending in eternal green  
 The holly and the pine !

### IX.—BURNS THROUGH FRENCH SPECTACLES.

FROM *THE WEEKLY SCOTSMAN*, February 25th, 1893.

SCOTSMEN will read, or at least hear of, with peculiar interest, a French estimate of Robert Burns, contained in a work by Auguste Angellier, published by Hachette & Cie., Paris. The title of the book is "Robert Burns: His Life and Works," and consists of two large octavo volumes, each containing some five hundred pages. The first of these is devoted to the life of the poet, and the second to a criticism of his writings. The story of Burns' life is told in great detail, and with considerable dramatic power. It is not a mere compilation from English biographies, but is the result of a thorough study of the original authorities. Speaking of the condition of education in Scotland in the end of the century, the author says:—"That which made Scotland what she has been, that which brought forth from her sparse population a considerable number of illustrious men, an incalculable number of distinguished men, was her system of primary education. She had organised that universal education which our age believes that it has invented. In every parish the poor could be educated. It was meagre teaching no doubt, often given in a mere shed by ignorant men. But what did that matter? The people had that thirst for knowledge which in prompting energy and activity of life is worth more, worth a thousand times more, than the possession and the satiety of knowledge. Masters taught and pupils learnt as best they could; and goodwill counts for much in everything. In almost every cottage, by the light of a peat fire, for they hardly ever burnt coal in those days, and the Scotch hills are mostly covered with brushwood, they read eagerly, they handed on to each other the few books that

they possessed, often books of theology or collections of sermons; they discussed the orthodoxy and the doctrine of their minister, sometimes with native eloquence or perspicuity, always with that tenacity in argument which is characteristic of the race. Whilst the towns in other countries were still in the lowest depth of stagnant ignorance, the traveller passing through the most miserable Scotch clachan was surprised to find germs and sometimes wonderfully full-blown flowers of intellectual life."

In his treatment of Burns's character M. Angellier is prepared to make excuses for him, but he will not in his interest relax the fundamental principles of morality. Speaking of the spirit in which he has approached the problem, he says:—"I may perhaps be told that I have been too lenient, that I have too often found excuses for a life full of shortcomings. I would answer that I have not been lenient as regards facts; I have extenuated nothing; I have concealed nothing. Some facts there are of which no one had seen the bearing, and I have pointed it out; so that the poet's admirers may reproach me for being hard on him, and for letting the sun shine in certain corners which might have been allowed to remain dark. Nor have I been lenient in interpreting his acts of weakness and selfishness. I believe I have given to each of them its proper moral value as measured by the sufferings of which it was the cause. Leniency only appears in my general estimate of the man, in noting the good there was in him, his qualities, his efforts, the circumstances of his life, and the impulses of a nature which was part of his genius. Here am I lenient, though leniency



is but justice. I am not a judge that I should condemn a creature like myself. I am not infallible, nor is the cruel duty imposed upon me ; I speak with pity and precaution on the obvious failings of a fellow-creature, of a great fellow-creature, whose whole life I do not know, whose sufferings I cannot feel, whose motives I cannot measure, whose regrets I have not weighed, and of whom I only touch the rough bark which the actions form round the intentions of the soul."

As to the element of passion in his nature, M. Angellier says:—"Some of his biographers represent him as being led by his senses, and explain his faults as a conflict between spiritual gifts and a carnal and worldly constitution. It is hard to tell what poet's love is made of. There was certainly something else than passion in Burns's love, for there was poetry and light-heartedness in the adventures which were most fatal to his life, and which are the darkest blots on his name. He was, above all, violent and excessive in everything. His anger was terrible. That force took him by fits and starts, outstripped his reflection, and preceded his remorse. But this merit is due to him : he was always frank—a quality which even his enemies recognised in him, and which was also recognised by those of his biographers who are least disposed to be lenient. To moderate and direct his violence, he would have needed some discipline. He was entirely devoid of it ; he had neither the training nor the will ; he was constantly the toy of his passions. He never once turned on them to face them. He never had any consolidation of character. He had, in short, a receptive temperament, with very energetic reactions. His heart was a crossway, where winds from every quarter had passed, had met, and had struggled. The line of his life is the broken trace of a succession of chances and accidents. The unequalled vivacity of actual sensation, which is the great quality of his literary productions, was the great vice in his character. He was seized, he was irresistibly allured by it. Emotion came upon him and carried him away. He always belonged to the present, with no cares for the future, and sometimes without sufficient recollection of the past. Hence these moments where it seems as though he forgot too easily, and

those sudden reactions, which have a look of ingratitude, as, for instance, in his verses against Mrs. Riddell. Even his generosity was either spontaneous or on impulse. Prolonged and reflective generosity of sacrifice he had not. It can hardly be said to be apparent even in his marriage to Jean Armour, for that was an act so sudden that it might be called an impulse ; though now we know that it lasted. He was like a tree which sheds its leaves at every gust, making whirlwinds for itself in which it is lost, and which hide the sky from it."

The main flaw in his character was his egoism, though it was a generous egoism. He could not forget himself or subordinate his own interest to those of others. There was no common measure between them. This weakness was the cause of that which weighs most heavily upon his memory—the suffering which he inflicted upon others.

After speaking of the want of continuity and set purpose in his life and work, M. Angellier thus concludes his estimate:—"Nevertheless, that is not sufficient justice. He requires more. Weigh his defects, his faults, as heavily as you like, the scale where the pure gold is, easily turns the balance. Admiration increases as we examine his qualities. When one thinks of his sincerity, his uprightness, his kindness towards people and animals, his contempt for anything base, his hatred of any trickery—which in itself would be an honour—his disinterestedness, the many beautiful impulses that form his heart, the high inspirations of his mind, the intensity, the idealism which was necessary to him to keep his soul above his fate ; when one thinks that he felt all these generous feelings so intensely that they formed part of his intellectual life, that they came from him as jewels, so keenly did he feel them, so like was his soul to a furnace where precious metals were molten, that it might be said he was one of nature's noblemen, and of great goodness. When it is remembered how much he suffered, how much he overcame, and how much he accomplished, with what misery his genius had to fight to be born and to live, the perseverance of his years of apprenticeship, his intellectual exploits, and after all, his glory ; one says to oneself that what he did



not succeed in, or what he did not undertake, was as nothing compared to what he achieved, and that he was a man who accomplished much. And what remains to be said except that the clay of which he was made was full of diamonds, and that his life was one of the most valiant and the proudest that any poet ever lived?"

In another part of the book M. Angellier treats of Burns as the poet of love, analysing its influence upon him, and his treatment of its various aspects, its pleasures and its pains. He thus sums up Burns's attitude:—"Without doubt, love, as it has been sung by Burns, is, on the whole, neither very deep nor very lofty. It is not a love which illuminated the heart which bore it, and lighted hearts in the future with a new ideal of tenderness, very sweet or very brilliant. We must not look for the chaste constancy of Petrarch, the symbolic adoration of Dante, or the burning and refined passion of Shakespeare. And—to borrow other names from our own time so preoccupied with the ruling passion—we do not find the prostrate admiration of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the painful exaltation of Musset, or the ironical and heroical tortures of Henri Heine. These are the highest forms of love, of which up till the present time the human heart has given examples; and the works which preserve them, whether they sparkle with the glimmer of an opal like Petrarch's sonnets, or with the fire of rubies like Shakespeare's, are lights on the road to heaven. The love of Burns cannot be reckoned among these. He wants an ideal element, something more of chastity, an aspiration to higher things, the effort to become more worthy of the loved one, the feeling that she is all that is pure, and that the heart she dwells in must be purified for her; or the modern feeling of a common progress—the joy of aiding each other in climbing the hill of life. He also wants that which is the laurel on the brow of love—devotion, the annihilation and the gift of self. He remains personal, egotistical. There is an almost hateful 'I'

which always betrays itself. He knew not the sublime generosity of love; he did not freely give himself up. Whatever be the worth of a human soul, it adds to it by self-abrogation, and the heart has never attained to its fullest value until it has denied itself. That which gives incomparable beauty to the sonnets of Elizabeth Barrett Browning is the way she forgets self before the one she loves, the way that she pours out her life at his feet like a sweet ointment. The fixed personality of Burns is in the other extreme: that supreme munificence was denied him. On the other hand, to be reckoned among ardent lovers he lacks concentration and continuity. He is disseminated, scattered, belonging to no one. Obligated to begin from the beginning each time, he continually came back to the starting point, and never passed the term of novelty. His love has always the vivacity, but also all the rather superficial agitation of a first attack. He has never been to the end; he knew not the succeeding stages: the calm possession, the serenity, or the harmonious marriage of two lives."

In a thoughtful chapter on the poet's tenderness for animals, he says:—"Burns draws animals as they are, with their innocent ways; free from all artfulness, and with that ignorance of their faults which makes them pardonable like those of children. Their soul never develops out of a state of confused childhood. Burns loves them so, quite frankly; not as the curious moralist who finds amusement in them, but as a man who makes use of them, who appreciates their obedience, their patience at work, their good qualities, and who is thankful to them for their assistance. There is not in his whole works a passage in which he speaks of them in harshness or anger. The bitterness which he sometimes felt towards men never enters into his relations to animals. His manner of speaking to them is marked by affection and humour, and he never better succeeds in mixing tenderness with a little bantering fun than when he is speaking to them."



## X.—BY BONNIE DOON.

*A Reminiscence BY JAMES COGHILL.*

I STAND upon a lofty Arran hill :  
 Behind me lie wild moors of heath-clad  
     peat :  
 Before, the blue expanse of waters still,  
     Which oft, when tempest-toss'd, have raved  
     and beat  
 Wildly along thy shores, oh, island fair—  
     Thou brightest gem that decks old Clutha's  
     firth—  
 And, as I stand, I gaze towards Auld Ayr,  
     Musing of him to whom fair Kyle gave  
     birth.

The Auld Clay biggin' once again I see,  
     As when I stood upon its hallowed floor :  
 This was the birth-place—*this*, oh, Burns—  
     of *thee*,  
     Whom peer and peasant equally adore !  
 There stands the bed which, on thy natal  
     morn,  
     Gave to our land her laurel'd King of Song :  
 Here sat the gossip who, when thou wast born,  
     Proclaimed that Coila's fame thou should'st  
     prolong !

Methinks I see thee on the gossip's knee,  
     Thy infant gaze fixed, wondering, on her  
     face,  
 As, keekin' in thy loof, she fondles thee,  
     The while those scores and lines she seeks  
     to trace :  
 Thank heav'n she ne'er foresaw thy mourn-  
     ful fate,  
     As she foretold thy ranting, youthful years—  
 Had she portrayed thee dire misfortune's  
     mate,  
     Thy infant laughter might have turn'd to  
     tears !

I seem to rove once more by Bonnie Doon,  
     I seem to see the rose and woodbine twine :  
 The little birds their warblings sweetly tune,  
     Calling to mind thy lyric pathos fine.

Hark ! On my ear in harmony complete  
     The voices fall of youths and maidens fair—  
 Yes, 'tis that song of thine, so soft and sweet,  
     Borne from Doon Brig upon the summer  
     air !

I seem to stand again beside the spot  
     Where lie the ashes of thy parents dear—  
 Meet is it all who mourn the poet's lot  
     Should o'er these ashes shed a reverent  
     tear :  
 The dust of her who bore thee to that sire  
     Whom thou reveréd'st as the best of men,  
 And his, to all who love thy matchless lyre,  
     Should sacred be, ev'n as yon but-an'-ben !

Shall memory quit these scenes by classic  
     Doon  
     Unmindful of Tam's flight from yon witch-  
     gang ?  
 Of Alloway's haunted kirk's grim piper loon ?  
     Of Cutty Sark, the "soople jade an'  
     strang" ?  
 No, no : immortal as thy sweetest song  
     Must aye remain that gallop in the dark,  
 When Tam on Maggie sped by Doon along  
     To flee the legion led by Cutty Sark !

\*        \*        \*        \*

But I must quit this lofty Arran hill,  
     Ere falls the gloaming on the heath-clad  
     moor :  
 Good Night, thou blue expanse of waters  
     still—  
     Auld Ayr, no longer I behold thy shore !  
 Good Night, Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie  
     Doon !  
     Good Night, thou Auld Clay biggin' of the  
     Bard !  
 May I these scenes revisit oft, and soon,  
     Which claim my heart's most reverent  
     regard !



## XI.—BURNS IN FRENCH.

FROM THE *NEW YORK SUN*, MARCH 19TH, 1893.

A LITERARY *tour de force*, if there ever was such a thing, has just been performed by M. Auguste Angellier in his translation of Robert Burns's poems into French. Of course, the complete accomplishment of the thing is impossible, but Mr. Angellier's near approach to it is surprising in the extreme. Naturally enough, portions of the translations are laughable, and if Burns could read them now as they appear in the diplomatic language, with all the violent twists which the translator is obliged to give to that flexible tongue in his effort to follow the poet foot by foot, he might feel that there was at last a full and favourable response to his often quoted wish:

"O, wad some power the giftie gi'e us  
To see oursel's as ithers see us!"

Who ever thought of seeing "Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut" in French? But here it is sure enough in Parisian fashion:

"O! Willie a brassé un demi-boisson de malt,  
Et Rob et Allan vinrent le goûter;  
Pendant toute cette nuit, trois cœurs plus joyeux  
Vous ne les auriez pas trouvés dans le chrétienté.

"Nous n'étions pas très gris, nous n'étions pas très gris,  
Nous avons juste une petite goutte dans l'œil.  
Le coq peut chanter, le jour peut se montrer,  
Toujours nous goutons la liqueur d'orge."

Here is the original:

"Willie brew'd a peck o' maut,  
And Rob and Allan cam to pree;  
Three blither hearts that lee-lang nicht  
Ye wadna find in Christendie.

"We are na fou, we're na that fou,  
But just a drappie in our e'e;  
The cock may crawl, the day may daw,  
And ay we'll taste the barley bree."

For the benefit of the uninitiated we will here translate the translator's effort:

"O, Willie has brewed a peck of malt,  
And Rob and Allan came to sample it;  
During all that night three hearts more joyous  
You would not have found them in Christianity.

"We were not very drunk, we were not very drunk,  
We had just a little drop in the eye;

The cock can sing, the day show itself,  
Still we taste the liquor of barley."

But perhaps the funniest of all is the French version of the "Address to the De'il." Here is a portion of the original:

"But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!  
O wad ye tak a thought and men'!  
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—  
Still hae a stake—  
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,  
Ev'n for your sake?"

And this is the way M. Angellier renders it:

"Allons, bonsoir vieux Nick,  
Je désire que tu réfléchisses et que tu t'amendes.  
Tu pourrais peut-être, je n'en sals rien,  
Avoir encore une chance;  
Cela me fait chagrin de penser à ce trou  
Même pour toi."

As the *Pall Mall Gazette* aptly puts it, the "Allons, bonsoir vieux Nick" reminds one of the Frenchman who translated "All Hail, Macbeth!" by the immortal words, "Bonjour, Monsieur Macbeth!" But let us admire M. Angellier's "Address to the De'il," stripped of its French costume and standing in the Anglo-Saxon bareness:

"Let us go, good evening, old Nick,  
I wish that you might reflect and mend yourself.  
You might perhaps, I know nothing about it,  
Have again a chance;  
It grieves me to think of that hole  
Even for you."

From "Tam o' Shanter" this is the portion of the translation which is criticised mercilessly on the other side of the Atlantic:

"Quand les colporteurs quittent la rue  
Et que les voisins altérés rencontrent les voisins;  
Comme les jours de marché tirent sur le tard,  
Et que les gens commencent à reprendre la route!  
Quand nous sommes assis à boire l'ale  
En train de devenir gris et parfaitement heureux.  
Nous oublions les longs milles écossais,  
Les marais, les ruisseaux, les satoirs, les barrières  
Qui sont entre nous et la maison  
Où est assise morose et mauvaise notre dame  
Rassemblant ses sourcils comme un orage s'amasse,  
Et soignant sa colère pour la tenir chaude."



Here is the original :

" When chapman billies leave the street,  
When drouthy neebors, neebors meet,  
As market days are wearing late,  
And folk begin to tak' the gate ;  
While we sit bousing at the nappy  
An' getting fou and unco happy.

" We think na on the lang Scots miles,  
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,  
That lie between us and our hame,  
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,  
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,  
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm."

All things considered, this translation is not so awfully bad. In fact, it is about as good as any man could make it ; and the critics might profit by the lesson contained in the saucy remark of the young coloured gentleman to his mother-in-law. He was practising on the fiddle, and he played " John Brown's Body " as well as he could, but the instrument was out of tune. " You played that horribly, John," said the old woman. " You wouldn't play it better yourself," retorted John. And she had nothing more to say.

## XII.—BURNS IN BOHEMIA.\*

THERE has just been issued from a Prague publishing house a little octavo volume of 188 pages, containing about 200 of the songs and ballads of Burns, translated into Cech by Professor Sladek, a distinguished Bohemian patriot, poet, scholar, and journalist, whose work we noticed some time ago in connection with Signor Ulisse Ortensi's Italian translation. Having been favoured with an advance copy of the work, a few words regarding the book and its author cannot fail to prove interesting to our readers of the Burns persuasion.

The work is published under the auspices of the Royal Academy of Science and Letters of Bohemia, and forms volume twelve of a series of translations representing the works of the greatest poets of the Italic, Teutonic, and Slavonic races. The list of the Academy's publications contains Burns and Mickiewicz, by Professor Sladek ; Ariosto, Alfieri, Calderon, Shelley, Byron, etc., by other scholars. It is expected that the present volume of Burns translations will be followed by another, and that the two instalments will be of such a nature as to convey to the Bohemian people a fairly adequate notion of our Scottish minstrel. In this way the Bohemian Academy is doing precisely the same good work as has been done by the Berlin Society of Foreign Literature, to whom Goethe dedicated the German translation of Carlyle's " Life of Schiller," in the introduction

to which the German poet translated a large part of Carlyle's magnificent essay on Burns.

We must congratulate the Ceske Akademie on being so fortunate in their choice of a translator for Burns. Professor Sladek is a linguist and philologist of wide range and accomplishments. He has served a long apprenticeship as a translator of English poetry, besides being one of the foremost of living Bohemian lyrical poets. A man does not execute translations from Longfellow, Shakespeare, Byron, Keats, Coleridge, Hood, Tennyson, Dante, Gosse, Dobson, and others without learning many things of the utmost importance to him in the mere technique of the art of poetry.

These qualifications, joined to a rare appreciation of Scottish literature, singled out Professor Sladek as the man *par excellence* who could do justice to the compositions of our national poet, and these expectations have been more than realised ; and we only regret that it is impossible to convey to the reader, unless he is conversant with Cech, a proper idea of how well the translator has done his work.

In some half-a-dozen pages M. Sladek gives the chief events in the life of Burns, and we have to say of it that it is the only life of the poet written by a foreigner that does not contain errors in fact and chronology. Some French and German translations are most tantalising in these respects.

\* Robert Burns : Vybor Z. Pisni : a Ballad. Prelozil, Josef V. Sladek, Praze, 1892.



The closing paragraph of his introduction contains this reference to two English authors:—

“Za pratelskon pomoc, ktere se mi ochotne dostalo z Anglie od basnika Ed. W. Gosse a vydavatele “Burnsovy Kroniky” pana Johna Muira z Kilmarnocku, vydavam vrele diky.”

We referred to Professor Sladek’s training as a translator, and his intimate knowledge of the technique of English poetry. The book before us is a remarkable proof of his abilities. In every case he has retained the peculiar and difficult rhymes of Burns. No matter how difficult the stanza may be to manipulate, or the words selected as rhymes, he has overcome every obstacle. We quote a few lines of his rendering of the passage in “Tam o’ Shanter” describing the orgies of the witches’ Sabbath:—

Jeeminku Jene, smely reku !  
Inspiring, bold John Barleycorn !  
Jak chrabrost budis ve cloveku !  
What dangers thou canst make us scorn !  
Tvou cackou krev kdy vzilach mame,  
Wi’ tippetny, we fear nae evil ;  
Ni z dabra si nie nedelame !  
Wi’ usquabae, we’ll face the devil !—  
Tak Tam, v nemz hra to vsemi sidly.  
The swats sae ream’d in Tammie’s noddle,  
Dnes byl by pral se se strasidly ;  
Fair play, he caredna deils a boddle, etc.

Tried by the standard of excellence attained by French and German translators, our author’s work will bear favourable comparison. Let the first verse of “Scots wha hae” suffice in this respect:—In Cech—

Skoti, ktere Wallace ved ;  
Skoti, s nimiz Bruce sel v pred,  
Vitejte mi naposled  
V hrob, neb vitezstvi.

In German—

Schotten, die Wallace’ Blut geweiht,  
Bruce so oft gefuhrt zum Streit ;  
Grab sind Sieg, sie sind bereit,  
Auf deme, schlieszt die Reih !

In French—

Ecossais, qui avez saigné sous Wallace,  
Ecossais, qui Bruce a souvent conduits,  
Soyez les bienvenus à votre lit sanglant,  
Ou à la victoire glorieuse.

The Frenchman has translated the word “glorious,” an expletive suggested by Thomson to suit the “stern hymn” to the tune “Lewis Gordon,” whereas Burns had written his song to fit the air, “Hey, tutti tatti.” The same translator, among a great number of similar errors, translates the four suppressed lines in “Tam o’ Shanter.” We are glad to notice that Professor Sladek has not fallen into any of these errors. Indeed, his editorial work has been done admirably, because he has not been content to follow the translators who preceded him.

Now that Professor Sladek has given us the first translation of Burns into a Slavonic language, we hope to see other nations of the same family introducing the healthy and vigorous writings of our poet to the notice of their people.

In addition to the labours already mentioned, our author has published over a dozen volumes of poetry, some of which has been set to music by the best Bohemian composers. His latest book, “Ceske” Pisne (National Lyrics), is “Dedicated to John Muir, pioneer of Bohemia’s cause in Scotland.”

### XIII.—THE ALDINE BURNS.\*

FROM *THE LITERARY WORLD*, June 16th, 1893.

THE three volumes of the new “Aldine” Burns are claimed to be “the most satisfactory edition yet published.” Mr. George A. Aitken, the editor, has done his work

with industry and excellent judgment. A full memoir prefaces the poems. Nothing new, at this time of day, can be said about Burns, but Mr. Aitken puts his facts freshly,

\* The Poetical Works of Robert Burns. Edited with a Memoir by George A. Aitken. In Three Volumes. (George Bell & Sons.) 2s. 6d. each volume.



and his remarks upon them and upon the poems commend themselves as judicious.

Burns's poetry faithfully reflects his life. Burns was human, and he was fond of jovial society, and in relation to woman his heart, as he confessed, "was tinder," but he was brave, honest, independent, and sympathised with all suffering. Mr. Aitken admits his hero's foibles, and is not disposed to claim, as some would do, that they are virtues; but he does show, and justifiably, that, looking at the man, looking at the time, and looking at the state of the agricultural people among whom he was brought up, too much has been made of the poet's youthful peccadilloes. Why should we, after all, be so eager to turn the lantern on to the specks that may have settled on men so sunlike as Burns, Shelley, and Carlyle? What baser ingratitude than to accept the rare gifts they bring us, and then to abuse the givers because they were personally mortals like ourselves?

Burns's place as a poet is unquestioned. He is the supreme popular songster of the world. Only Beranger comes within measurable distance of him. Through his poetry he has done much to mould the thought of our country. He has broadened its theology, quickened its social impulses, intensified the fervid nationalism of his country, of which Burns has become the real national saint; he has stimulated thousands to reach a higher ideal of character, and he has been the inspiration of the truest democracy. We quote Mr. Aitken's estimate of

#### BURNS AS A POET.

Of Burns's position as a poet it is difficult for any one to speak who was born in England, even though he come of an Ayrshire stock; fortunately, after the lapse of nearly a century since Burns's death, it is superfluous to say much on this head. He was essentially Scotch, and essentially the poet of the poor, whom he best understood. All his finest illustrations is of the life, manners, and scenery of the Lowlands, and from his writings, supplemented by those of Sir Walter Scott, the world derived a knowledge of Scotland and of its people far deeper and more sympathetic than any that there had been before. Burns loved Nature, but, as with everything else, it was not so much for its own

sake as for the human element associated with it. His sympathy included the daisy and the mouse whose nest he had turned up with the plough, but he compared the fate of the mouse to his own:

"Thy poor, earth-born companion,  
An' fellow mortal;"

and he associated the daisy with the helpless maid and the luckless bard. He hoped his Muse, "though homely in attire," might touch the heart; it is because of his sincerity and of his sympathy for man, and especially for the poorer and greater portion of the race, that his popularity is undying:

"Deep in the general heart of men  
His power survives."

Burns's humour is rarely without a strain of tenderness, and even when of the broadest there is often associated with it a touch of a deeper feeling, as in the case of his chief narrative poem, probably the greatest of all poems, "Tam o' Shanter," which, in its subject and treatment, is more pleasing than the "Jolly Beggars," and has none of the weak passages which are to be found in the "Cottar's Saturday Night," and in other pieces written in classical English, instead of that Ayrshire dialect which would long since have been almost extinct had it not been preserved in his verses. Of the delightful epistles to friends, most of them written at Mossgiel, which bristle with lines that have now become proverbial, and which often show the poet at his best, there is no room here to speak at length. Of the wonderful satires it must be said that if, besides being brilliant, they were sometimes harsh or coarse, it was Burns's very love for the beautiful that caused him to attack with bitterness hypocrisy and meanness.

But it is as a writer of songs that Burns's memory will last for all time. He is the greatest lyric poet that Britain has produced, and it will be difficult to name his superior in the world's history. He found ready to hand an endless store of old songs, which have been sung by the people for centuries, and he took the familiar melody, and either composed entirely new words for it, or so altered the old version, by a few touches or additions, that any rudeness in structure or coarseness in tone disappeared under his



hand. How great a service he rendered to his country by thus purifying and idealising Scotch song only those who have studied the old collections which he used can realise; and if here and there he has written or left unrevised a coarse verse, we can only wonder that the songs he published are so pure as we find them. Sometimes he supplied to Johnson or Thomson verses of little merit when they pressed for lines for an air, and some of his English songs are no better than those of many a forgotten rhymers; but there remains a great body of melodies, welling straight from his heart, which can nowhere else be matched for its strength and passion, or for its tenderness and pity. He was most generous in his acknowledgment of indebtedness to his predecessors, Ramsay and Fergusson, but a comparison of their work, especially Ramsay's, shows how great was the advance Burns

had made. Fergusson, it must be remembered, died when he was twenty-four, and at that age Burns had produced very little that is of value. The Scotch songs that are worthy to rank with the best of Burns's works were generally written by poets—often ladies—whose fame rests upon the production of one or two pieces. For these we are very grateful, but what are they compared with the hundreds—humorous, passionate, pathetic, patriotic, convivial—left to us by Burns? Many of his songs have been already mentioned, and they are so familiar to all that any further attempt to enumerate them is unnecessary. No poet lacking Burns's warm heart, impassioned nature, and quick feelings, could have produced these pieces, which delight alike the cultured and the ignorant, the rich and the poor.

#### XIV.—MR. WM. R. SMITH'S VALUABLE COLLECTION OF BURNSIANA.

LOVERS of Burns everywhere, will be delighted to learn that there is in Washington, in the private possession of one of Uncle Sam's humble and obedient servants, the greatest collection of Burns's works to be found in America, and with two exceptions, in the world. It comprises in all 650 volumes, of which 150 are distinct and separate editions of Burns's poems, by actual count, and 500 other works directly relative to Burns of a biographical, critical or analytical nature.

The owner is Mr. Wm. R. Smith, a native of Scotland, for forty years past superintendent of the National Botanic Garden, chairman of the parking commission which looks after Washington's trees—the pride of the nation—and president of the Society of American Florists. Despite these titles he is a poor man, for his hobby keeps him so. His unique collection is the labour of his lifetime and in size and quality is inferior only to the priceless accumulations of Burnsiana at Glasgow, Kilmarnock and London.

Besides the books there are in the collection valuable Burns manuscripts, prints, sheet songs, portraits, engravings, photographs, autographs, curios, relics and mementoes

gathered through many years and arranged with loving, reverent care and fervent enthusiasm. Compared with these 650 volumes the Mitchell library at Glasgow boasts 1,071 volumes relating to Burns and the British Museum in London a less number; but in this country neither the Library of Congress nor the Boston public library nor any of the great libraries of New York can claim anything like so wonderful a collection of Burnsiana as Smith's, although the Lenox library in New York owns some very rare Burns manuscripts in holograph.

The repository of these literary treasures is a low-roofed, vine-clad, one-and-a-half-story lodge in the Botanic Garden which Mr. Smith occupies as superintendent. It resembles nothing so closely as a Scottish forester's cottage. Against the rear side of it is built one of the many green houses of the garden, while its front walls are overgrown with ivy and the pathways leading to the door are edged with evergreen shrubs. In this lowly dwelling Mr. Smith lives as a solitary scholar and bookworm, alone with his shepherd dogs and his precious books, most of his little salary from the government being spent in



adding to them. Two of the rooms on the ground floor are filled with books, numbering 4,000 volumes, deposited in ten book cases, which almost entirely flank the walls. In the larger room are seven cases, filled with works on biography, history, science, art, poetry, light literature, botany and horticulture.

The second room, which is not over fifteen feet square, contains three cases, devoted exclusively and solely to Burnsiana. Here, on the walls, are eleven different portraits of the immortal Scottish bard—four of them engraved, three after Nasmyth by Miller, Robinson and Nicholson respectively, and one after Allen by McRae; a medallion photograph and an engraving of Skirving's portrait of Burns; an illuminated lithograph of the poet and his cottage; three photographic views of the Burns statue at Albany from different points; and a photograph of the Burns statue in Central Park, New York. Then there is a bust of Burns on a tripod—a replica of Sir John Steell's sculpture in the poet's corner in Westminster Abbey, and a portrait of George Washington and a bust of Sir Walter Scott above two of the book cases. Except this Washington portrait and bust of Scott there is nothing whatever in the room in the way of decorations or other contents but Burnsiana and articles of "Burnsomania." In the words of London *Punch*, referring to the Burns centenary at Sydenham in 1859, Smith has here

"Laid, in their niches, Burns's relics,  
Autographs, snuff boxes, letters,  
Hair of the poet himself,  
Hair of his loved Highland Mary,  
The portrait by Nasmyth, undoubted.  
Also the worm-eaten desk  
On which was composed 'Tam O' Shanter,'  
Brown as the limbs of the hags  
Who danced at that Scottish walpurgis."

His love and idolatry of Burns began when he was a lad of ten in Athelstaneford, Haddingtonshire, Scotland, when with the first two shillings he ever earned—won as a prize at school for reciting Gray's *Elegy* without a flaw—he purchased a copy of Burns's poems. His love of Burns grew as he grew, and his appreciation of the bard's Scottish declaration of independence, "A man's a man for a' that," made a man of him, brought

him to the United States and caused him to become a thoroughly ingrained American. Since then, by patient dint of rummaging old bookstores, by purchase, correspondence and exchange, he has gradually assembled his wonderful collection. As his first two shillings were spent for a copy of Burns, he says, so will his last half dollar be. When he first took charge of the Botanic Garden, shortly after the inauguration of President Franklin Pierce, the snakes were crawling about there in great profusion, even invading the sacred precincts of the lodge itself and the room in which the Burnsiana are now housed.

In the collection American and British editions of Burns are grounded separately. Among the 150 different editions is a beautiful facsimile of the first edition published, that of 1786, printed at Kilmarnock, 8vo. Then there is a well-preserved copy of the first Edinburgh edition, 1787, printed for the author and sold by Wm. Creech, with Beugo's famous engraving of Nasmyth's portrait, 8vo., and an equally well-preserved copy of the second Edinburgh, 8vo., with portrait, known as the "Stinking Edition," from the fact of a typographical error in the "Address to a Haggis," where the words "skinking ware," (sloppy goods) are printed "stinking ware." This blunder escaped the eagle eye of Burns and has been repeated in many editions, down to some of the very latest.

Then there is a copy of the Belfast edition of 1793, 2 vols. 12mo., with portrait engraved by P. Halpin, and a copy of the third Edinburgh edition of 1794, two vols., with portrait, the last one to receive the personal editing of the immortal author. Next there is a Liverpool edition of 1800, 4 vols., 8vo., with Nasmyth's portrait engraved by J. Negle, and the four famous British editions of 1801, printed respectively at Berwick-upon-Tweed, 2 vols. 12mo.; at London, 4 vols. 8vo., at Glasgow by Thomas Stuart, 8vo., and at Glasgow by Chapman & Lang, with portrait by Mackenzie. Next are two editions printed in 1802, one at Edinburgh, two vols. 32mo., and the other at Kirkcaldy, 2 vols. 18mo.

Dropping subsequent British editions for a moment and taking up the early American, this collection contains the largest number of fine American specimens in the world. First



among these is the New York edition of 1788, published by J. and A. McLean, 12mo. Gen. George Washington possessed a copy of this edition, containing his autograph on the flyleaf. Mr. Smith has been "gunning" for it for years. Recently he located it in the library of Congressman B. F. Cable of Rock Island, Ill. William H. Vanderbilt of New York was "after" it, too, but Mr. Cable declares emphatically, "Vanderbilt can't buy it!" Then there is a superb copy of the Philadelphia edition of 1801, by Benjamin Johnson, Jacob Johnson and Robert Johnson, 2 vols., 18mo., and a copy of the rare Wilmington edition of 1804, 12mo., with portrait, published by Bonsal & Niles.

Coming down to more modern American issues, there is the Philadelphia of 1807, by Peter Stewart, 2 vols., 18mo.; the Philadelphia of 1811, by Benjamin Chapman, 12mo.; the Baltimore of 1812, by A. Miltenberger, with portrait by W. R. Jones; the Baltimore of 1814, by F. Lucas, jr., and J. Cushing, 4 vols., 18mo., profusely illustrated; the Salem, N.Y., edition of 1815, by J. P. Reynolds, 2 vols., 24mo.; the Baltimore of 1816, by F. Lucas, jr. & Co., 8vo.; the Philadelphia of 1818, by Benjamin Warner, 2 vols., 18mo., with portrait; the Boston of 1820, by Wells & Lilly, 2 vols., 18mo., and the Philadelphia of 1822, by McCarty & Davis, 2 vols., 18mo., with portrait.

Then, there are copies of the S. King, New York, edition, 4 vols., 24mo., and the W. A. Bartow, New York, edition, 4 vols., 18mo., both of 1824, the latter bearing the autograph of Charles O'Connor, the distinguished New York lawyer. Still later is the 1826 New York edition, by Wm. Borradaile, royal 8vo., and the 1830 New York edition, by S. and D. A. Forbes, 12mo.; the 1831 Philadelphia edition, by J. Crissy & J. Grigg, 8vo.; the 1832 New York, by Booth & Son, 8vo.; the 1834 Boston, by Hilliard, Gray & Co., 4 vols., and the Boston edition by James B. Dow, of the same year, 2 vols., 18mo.; the 1835 New York, by Wm. Pearson, 8vo., with portrait by J. Moffat; the 1836 Hartford, Conn., by Judd, Loomis & Co., 8vo., and the New York edition of the same year, 2 vols., 24mo.; the 1840 Halifax, by Wm. Milner, 32mo.; the 1841 New York, by J. & H. G. Langley, 8vo.;

the 1842 Philadelphia, by J. Crissy, with portrait by Welsh, and the 1843 New York, by Robert P. Bixby & Co., 12mo. Concluding the American rarities mention should be made of the 1846 Philadelphia, by John Locken, 24mo.; of the 1852 New York, by Harper & Brothers, 4 vols., 12mo.; and of the 1856 Philadelphia, by Willis P. Hazard, 12mo.

Turning again to the British editions unnoticed before, the collection contains these, among other gems: London edition, 1804, 3 vols., 12mo., with portrait by R. H. Cromek after Nasmyth; Glasgow, 1804, 18mo., with portrait; Alnwick, 1808, 2 vols., 12mo.; London, 1808, "Reliques of Robert Burns," 8vo.; London, 1809, 18mo.; London, 1810, 2 vols., 12mo.; Alnwick, 1812, 2 vols., 12mo., illustrated by Bewick; Dr. Currie's edition, Edinburgh, 1815, 4 vols., 8vo., with portrait by E. Mitchell; Glasgow, 1816, 12mo., with portrait by R. Scott; London, 1817, 24mo., illustrated; Ayr, 1819, with portrait by Wedgewood; London, 1819, 2 vols., 18mo., with portrait by M. N. Bate; Glasgow, 1821, 12mo.; London, 1822, 2 vols., 12mo., with portrait by S. Freeman; London, 1823, 3 vols., 12mo.; Edinburgh, 1823, 12mo.; London, 1824, 2 vols., 8vo., with portrait by Freeman after R. Malcolm's picture; London, 1826, 24mo., with portrait; London, 1828, 8vo.; London, 1829, 8vo., with portrait by J. Rogers.

Not so many rarities occur in the numerous editions of Burns since 1820, but these selected volumes in Mr Smith's collection are worthy of particular mention: London, 1830, 2 vols., 32mo., with portrait; London, 1831, 12mo.; Glasgow, 1835, 5 vols., 12mo.; Glasgow, 1836, printed on foolscap, 8vo.; with portrait by Freeman; London, 1838, 2 vols., 4to., illustrated; London, 1838, 4 vols., 18mo.; London, 1838, imperial 8vo., with portrait by W. C. Edwards; the successive Edinburgh editions of 1838 and 1839, imperial 8vo.; London, 1839, 12mo.; London, 1840, imperial 8vo., illustrated, and the London, 1842, imperial 8vo., with portrait by Rogers.

Besides all these are a number of more recent editions that have become exceedingly scarce. Among these are the so-called



Edinburgh-Glasgow-London edition of 1846, imperial 8vo., richly embellished, with portrait by H. Robinson after drawing by Skirving; likewise the 32mo. London edition of 1846, the 32mo. Stocksley edition of 1847, the 48mo. London of 1847 and the 32mo. London of 1850, the 12mo. Edinburgh of 1852, in five vols., the celebrated London "Elzevir" of 1864 and lastly the unique 8vo. Kilmarnock of 1870. There are also sixty-four other separate and distinct editions of Burns not so rare.

Then there is an interesting collection of guide books of the land of Burns; publications of the proceedings of Burns clubs and societies, of which there are many in Scotland and in America; proceedings of the Burns federation, Burns dictionaries and concordances, memorials of the universal Burns centenary of 1859, of the Burns festival at Ayr in 1844 and of the Kilmarnock centenary of 1886 in celebration of the first publication of Burns's poems; and scrap books containing all sorts of clippings on Burns, his monuments, statues and pictures, and notes of progress made in the movements for erecting statues of Burns in San Francisco, Chicago, Providence and other American cities. Not the least prized among these accessory books are the Rev.

Hamilton Paul's clerical defence of Burns, Dean Stanley's History of the Scottish Church, and Wallace Bruce's lyrical study, "The Land of Burns."

In addition to all these literary remains of Burns and the collection of authors who have done homage to the ploughman poet's genius Mr. Smith's aggregation of Burns curios deserves special notice. Here is a gilded plaster cast of Burns's skull, a gruesome object, obtained in 1834, when the mausoleum containing Burns's body at Dumfries was opened to receive that of his wife, "Bonny Jean." Here also is a chair from Scotland, constructed after the exact similitude of Burns's chair, together with a medallion photograph of the interior of Burns's cottage at Dumfries, photographs of Burns's nieces—the Misses Begg—and photographs of their modest house near Ayr, some pen and ink sketches of the haunted Kirk of Alloway, and an oaken whisky cup—a "quaich or nuggen"—made from the rafters of that same kirk. Two other relics of these rafters are known to exist, and they are made up in the shape of chairs, one of which can be seen at Abbotsford and the other at Windsor Castle. A distant relative of Mr. Smith's long ago made these chairs and gave him the drinking cup hewn out of a chip.

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#### XV.—SONNET BY ROBERT REID.

*On reading that the great-grand-daughter of Robert Burns, who is said to have the Poet's eyes, refused to be put on exhibition at the World's Fair, Chicago.*

"SHE has the eyes of Burns," they say; those  
     great  
 Proud orbs of his that blazed with lofty  
     scorn,  
 When Meanness woke their fires; or tear-  
     drops (born  
 Of human pity) fill'd, to hear narrate  
 Some tale of wretchedness; O priceless  
     dower!  
 O starlike gems a queen might yearn to  
     gain!

O noble heritage, not given in vain  
 To one oblivious of their pride and power:  
 For much it pleases me, dear girl! to see  
     That native Independence in thee dwell  
     Which, scorning sordid gain, disdains to  
     sell  
 Those matchless glances for a paltry fee.  
 This, more than accident of eyes or name  
 Tells me whose blood is throbbing in thy  
     frame!



## XVI.—REMINISCENCES OF ROBERT BURNS.

*By ANDREW WANLESS, Detroit, Michigan.*

THERE has been so much spoken and written regarding Robert Burns and his surroundings, that it is now almost an impossibility to know what is the truth and what is the untruth. Innumerable instances of these might be given, but there is little or no use in multiplying words on a subject where there can be no question.

I have before me an article on Robert Burns written at Cortland Village, N.Y., February, 1836, and signed H.S.R. After a glowing philippic to

“ ——— the sweetest bard

That ever breathed the soothing strain ! ”

the writer thus proceeds :—

“ It has been my good fortune to have been long and intimately acquainted with one who was the early friend and associate of Robert Burns. Burns and K—— were born near each other, in Ayrshire ; were nearly of the same age, and their situation and prospects in life were similar.” We are indebted to this surviving octogenarian for some interesting recollections of his illustrious friend.

Burns’s bodily strength was great, and he had few competitors in athletic exercises of the field ; and in corroboration, my friend affirmed “ that he could plough mair in a day than any other twa in a’ the parish.” “ Burns’s powers of conversation were of the most striking cast. His eye, his finely modulated voice, and his enunciation were all energy and eloquence.” To this tribute Sir Walter Scott bears testimony, and I may here state that he only met Burns on one occasion—in Edinburgh, in the year 1786. In his recollections of Burns, he thus speaks :—“ There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments ; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character. It was large and of a dark cast, which glowed, literally glowed, when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such an eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time.” Other writers have written to the same effect, but to my mind I think the Duchess of Gordon struck

the nail on the head when she said that when in conversation “ Burns had fairly carried her off her feet.” But to again quote from the article. “ Burns,” said my old friend, “ was always in love, and he did not, in all instances, evince much taste in his choice of objects, as some o’ his sweetest sangs were addressed to raw Scottish lasses ye wad never dream o’ admiring.” David Sillar even complains that he “ could never take a walk with his friend, but Robin would chase away after the first lassie who chanced to cross their path, and would enter into conversation with her although she was a perfect stranger.” The writer then comments on Gavin Hamilton’s troubles with the church, and the origin of “ Holy Willie’s Prayer.” William Fisher, it will be remembered, was the “ Holy Willie,” and he was Hamilton’s “ most officious opposer in the Kirk ;” but to again quote : “ It was soon after this that my old friend, who now lived in a different parish from Burns, received a letter from him enclosing “ Holy Willie’s Prayer,” with a request to try its efficacy on William Fisher. “ I wasna slaw in complying. Fisher’s eyes sparkled wi’ glee when the first verses were read off, but when I cam’ to the seventh verse he rushed out of the room. He could stand it no longer, and frantically exclaimed, ‘ That blackguard Burns !—he’ll go to hell—he’ll go to hell ! ’ ” The article in question then states that “ Burns, in his twenty-fourth year, cultivated a farm in connexion with his brother Gilbert. His visits to Mauchline made him acquainted with Miss Armour, but his intimacy with ‘ Jean ’ being discovered, he was refused the house. To the little inn, however, Burns wad gang and then send for ‘ Jean ’ to come and be courted.” “ My old friend was then a travelling agent for a mercantile house and often visited Mossgiel. On one of these occasions he became the bearer of a present to Miss Armour, who was at that time a mother in her father’s house, and the present consisted of a bag stuffed with cheese, butter and garden vegetables. When admitted he



found the young mother with her two sons confined to her bed in an upper apartment. Burns had followed unperceived. He flew to the bed and, 'putting his face to Jean's, and sine to each o' the wee bairns, he wept as if his heart would break.'"

In the years 1786-7, Robert Burns resided in Edinburgh and, as is well known, he frequently attended the meetings of the Masonic fraternity. At one of these meetings he was introduced to Robert Ainslie. A warm friendship sprang up, and they were frequently in the habit of taking long rambles together. On the 6th of May, 1787, Burns and his young companion, mounted on horseback, left the city of Edinburgh, passed over the Lammermoor hills, and reached Berrywell, near Dunse, where the parents of his companion resided. On glancing over Burns's "Border Tour," it appears that he fell violently in love with Miss Ainslie, and he thus exclaims, "Heavenly powers who know the weakness of human hearts, support mine. Charming Rachael, may thy bosom never be wrung by the evils of this life of sorrow, or by the villainy of this world's sons." On Sabbath, Burns, along with the Ainslies, went to the parish church of Dunse, and the text selected by Dr. Bowmaker was a heavy denunciation against obstinate sinners. Miss Ainslie from some cause failed to find the text, and on observing this, Burns presented her with the following lines:—

"Fair maid, you need not take the hint,  
Nor idle texts pursue;  
'Twas guilty sinners that he meant,  
Not angels such as you."

I may here remark that I have frequently sat in the identical seat where these lines were written. This may be something to say, but it amounts to nothing in comparison to the experience of my friend, Mr. James Graham, of Detroit. Mr. Graham is a native of Ayrshire, and in course of conversation he informed the present writer that he had slept one night in the identical bed where Burns was born.

At the time of Burns's visit to Berrywell, there resided in Dunse a man who possessed some literary instincts, and known by the name of Cimon Gray. In my youthful years

I have frequently seen this gentlemen. He was then a little old man, and was in the habit of standing at his door, in the Castle Wynd, with a night-cap on his head, beeking himself in the sun. He was pointed out to me by some of my companions as "the man wha wrote a letter to Robbie Burns." Some years ago I was informed that the original letter, with Burns's reply to it, were in the possession of my friend, Charles Watson, Esq., Dunse, and, to make a long story short, copies of these letters are now before me:—

"To Mr. ROBERT BURNS, Ayrshire Poet.

"SIR,—The great merit you possess as a poet has prompted me to send to you two little poetical pieces of mine—'The Jasperiad' and 'Rejoiciad.' Whether they possess any merit as poetical compositions I would wish to know from one who is so competent a judge as you. The 'Jasperiad' is founded on fact; and though it may have a little of the caricature in it, it does not depart from the real truth. It is a recent story. A Dunse rejoicing is a very barren subject, and by no means a sublime one. I have therefore endeavoured to make the 'Rejoiciad' a little more prolific by funny allusions and a number of little stories and pictures by way of similes, though they are rather little episodes than illustrations.

"I hope you will take this liberty of mine in good part, else I would be very angry at myself for taking it. You will be so good as return the copies, for they are the only ones I have.

"I am, Sir, your most obedt.,

"CIMON GRAY.

"Dunse, May 15th, 1787."

#### BURNS'S ANSWER.

"DEAR CIMON GRAY,—

The other day  
When you sent me some rhyme,  
I could not then just ascertain  
Its worth, for want of time;

"But now, to-day, good Mr. Gray,  
I've read it o'er and o'er,  
Tried all my skill, yet find I'm still  
Just where I was before.

"Wi' auld wives minions, give our opinions,  
Solicited or no,  
Then of its faults, my honest thoughts  
I'll give, and here they go:

"Such damned bombast, no time that's past  
Will show, or time to come;  
So Cimon, dear, your song I'll tear  
And fling it doon the lum."

Regarding the above correspondence I may be permitted to remark that the one "brither poet" might have treated the other



"brither poet" with a little more kindly consideration.

I may here state in conclusion on this subject that Robert Ainslie became eminent as a Writer to the Signet, and was the author of a work entitled "Reasons for a Hope that is in us." His daughter I have frequently conversed with. She was at that time the wife of the Rev. Mr. Robertson, one of the ministers of Dunse. Miss Ainslie I have also frequently spoken to. She comes up to my recollection as a handsome maiden lady who was respected and esteemed by all. Some years ago when in Louisville, Kentucky, my lamented friend, Hew Ainslie, the poet, informed me that he was related to the Ainslies of Berrywell. He spoke of Miss Ainslie. In fact, he would scarcely give over speaking in her praise, and curious to state, although more than half-a-century has passed away since I saw this lady, yet she still comes up to my recollection as perfect as if I had only met her "yestreen at the gloamin'." In a word, she was like Sterne's sister, "a most beautiful woman."

#### AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER.

"My dear Sir,—I understand that Mrs. Muir of Tarbolton Mill is likely to be involved in great difficulties, as to the settlement the late miller made. Will you be so obliging as to let me know the state of the case, and if you think it would answer any good purpose to advocate the case to Edinburgh at once. I can answer for her. A Writer to the Signet, an intimate friend of mine, will cheerfully undertake the business, without a single sixpence of fees, and our own countryman, David Cathcart, lies under promise to me to advocate at small expense whenever I represent female poverty in distress. I am much interested for her, and will, as far as I have interest in either, move heaven and earth in her behalf. My interest in the first is vastly improved since you and I were first acquainted. Oh! there is nothing like matrimony for setting a man's face Zionward, whether it be that it sublimates a man above this visible diurnal sphere, or whether it tires him of this sublunary state, or whether the delicious morsel of happiness which he enjoys

in the conjugal yoke gives him a longing for the feasts above—or whether a poor husband thinks he has every chance in his favour as, should he go to hell, he can be no worse—I shall leave to a weel-waled Presbytery of orthodox Ayrshire Priests.

"Yours most sincerely,

"ROBERT BURNS.

"Dumfries, July 16th, 1793."

In the year 1870 the MSS. of the above letter was handed to me by a friend. I caused it to be published in the papers, and it attracted much attention on both sides of the Atlantic. Regarding it I received several letters from the Rev. Hatley Waddell, Glasgow. In his *Life and Works of Burns* he publishes the letter. Since the day it was published I have been unable to throw any light upon it any further than this, that it is my opinion that Burns was the writer of it.

Miss Jessie Lewars has been celebrated by Burns both in song and epigram. She was the daughter of Mr. John Lewars, Supervisor of Excise. Her father was dead, and she resided with her brother in Dumfries, who was in the Excise department, and Burns and he, till the poet's death, were close companions and friends. Miss Lewars, as is well-known, was Burns's ministering angel when the angel of death was hovering near. When the poet's heart was filled with gloomy forebodings—when his soul had sunk down to the very depths of despair—it was her presence that brought to his heart a flickering hope. The following toast was scratched on a crystal goblet containing wine which Jessie was administering to him in bed:—

"Fill me with rosy wine,  
Call a toast—a toast divine;  
Give the poet's darling flame—  
Lovely Jessie be thy name."

Mrs. M'Pherson, who resided and who died some time ago in Detroit, was a native of Dumfries. She informed me that at one time her parents lived next door to Jessie Lewars, and a kindly relationship existed between the two families. On her return from her last visit to the land of her birth, she handed me a copy of the following poem, with this statement that Burns, while residing at Brow for the benefit of sea-bathing, composed it there and presented it to Miss



Lewars. She gave a copy of this poem to one of Mrs. M'Pherson's relations, and this copy I have now before me. On glancing it over in Mrs. M'Pherson's presence, I expressed some doubt regarding the authorship, upon which she became as mad as the deil pu'in' heather, and said that no another man on earth could have written it but Robbie Burns, and again explained how the copy of the poem came into her possession, with the additional statement that this was the last poem he ever composed. If it is Burns's composition, it is somewhat strange that it has never appeared in print. As before stated, Miss Lewars resided in Dumfries, but there can be little doubt but what she frequently visited him at Brow and administered to his wants. In corroboration I quote from one of Burns's letters to Mrs. Burns, written in the early part of 1796: "I am happy to hear by Miss Lewars that you are all well." The poem in question I now copy:—

#### WEARIN' AWA'.

The sun lies clasp'd in amber clouds  
Half hidden in the sea,  
And o'er the sands the glowing tide  
Comes racing merrily:  
The hawthorn hedge is white wi' bloom,  
The wind is soft and lown,  
And sad and still you watch by me,  
Your hand clasp'd in mine own.

Oh, let the curtain bide, Jessie,  
And raise my head awee,  
And let the bonnie setting sun  
Glint in on you and me.  
The world looks fair and bright, Jessie,  
Near loving hearts like you,  
But puirtith's blast sifts summer's love,  
And makes leal friendships few.

Oh, Jessie, in the dreary night,  
I clasp my burning hands  
Upon those throbbing sleepless lids,  
O'er eyes like glowing brands  
And wonder in my weary brain  
If haply, when I'm dead,  
My auld boon-friends for love of me  
Will gi'e my bairnies bread.

O, did the poor not help the poor,  
Each in their simple way,  
With humble gift and kindly words,  
God pity them I say!  
For many a man who clasp'd my hand  
With pledges o'er the bowl,  
When the wine-halo passed away,  
Proved but a niggard soul.

O, blessed thought, midst our despair,  
There is a promise made,  
That in the day the rough wind blows  
The east wind shall be stay'd.  
A few short years and those I love  
Will come again to me,  
In that bright realm without a sun—  
That land without a sea.

O wilt thou gang o' nights, Jessie,  
To my forsaken hearth,  
And be, as thou hast been to me,  
The truest friend on earth?  
Sae sweetly wi' your linnet voice,  
You'll sing my weans to rest,  
While Jeanie leans her weary head  
Upon your loving breast.

Ah! what is fame? Its wreath of bays  
Cools not the fever'd brow,  
Will't tell his name in coming day  
Who whistled at the plough,  
And wrote a simple song or two  
For happier hearts to sing  
Among the shining sheaves of corn,  
Or round the household ring.

Yet would I prize the bubble fame  
If my own artless lays  
Bore they sweet deeds and lovingness  
For future time to praise.  
True soul! I bless the poet skill  
Which won a friend like thee,  
Whose love, 'twixt love of home and heaven,  
Is with me constantly.

My esteemed friend, the Rev. Mr. Dickie, who resides in Detroit, and who is a native of Ayrshire, informs me that he well remembers Tam Samson. He states that he with other boys were in the habit of roaring into Tam's window, "Tam Samson's dead;" when out he would come as fast as he could hobble and cry, "Ye scorpions that ye are, if I could get a haud o' ye I wad let ye ken whether I am dead or no."



## XVII.—BURNS.

*By MARTIN BUTLER.*

As each succeeding year returns,  
We meet to honour Robert Burns ;  
Of Scotia's bards the prince and peer,  
And dearly loved and cherished here.

The rugged hills and barren isles  
Awake with laughter, songs, and smiles,  
At touch of his poetic wand,  
Unto each far, remotest land.

He sang the songs of joy and woe  
In cabins of the poor and low ;  
Whose quickening spark upswelling high  
Has mounted till it reached the sky.

Not prince, or lord, or king is great,  
But he who conquers adverse fate—  
And bids the flowers of love to bloom  
Around the altar or the tomb.

I've shared his laughter, joy, and mirth,\*  
By tavern bar or cottage hearth ;  
And listened to his "heartfelt prayer"  
In lonely glens, by Doon or Ayr.

And I, the least of all, the Muse  
Of mortals ever deigned to choose,  
Would weave a chaplet for his brow ;  
And as the changing year returns  
Will bless the name of ROBERT BURNS.

## XVIII.—THE PERSONALITY OF BURNS.

*By THOMAS DAVIES.*

A MANLY genius occasionally comes into the world. The central truths, the beautiful harmonies, of this great cosmos in which man lives are not understood and appreciated until genius discovers and interprets them. Humanity owes much to its great men.

On a blustering January day in the year 1759, in a cottage near Ayr, a man-child was born. That child was named Robert Burns. His parents were poor, toiling, honest folk. His father was a gardener and farmer, a serious, religious man, of stubborn integrity, independent spirit, with a strong sense of right. His mother was a sweet and gentle woman, who faithfully performed the duties of the humble household. The situation of the family compelled its members to toil. Burns received little regular school instruction. His education was not through masters and books, but his spirit was ready for all experiences, and his genius gave him that insight which no culture can supply. His father, with a respect for learning which is characteristic of the Scotch, gave him what instruction he could. Mr. John Murdoch, schoolmaster, taught him English grammar and composition. Mason's collection of

Prose and Verse fell in the boy's way, and he committed to memory many religious and secular poems. He was thoughtful and grave in his boyhood, and, strange to say, his ear was then remarkably dull and his voice untunable.

Burns was early introduced to the labours of the farm. He passed his life in the western and southern portions of the Lowlands ; the first six years at his birthplace ; the next eleven on a farm at Mount Oliphant, near by, leased by his father ; six on a farm at Lochlea, where his father died, worn out by hard work and financial difficulties ; four at Mossiel, where he and his brother were engaged in farming. The winters of 1786 and 1787 were spent in Edinburgh ; the summer intervening between those winters in tours in the Lowlands and Highlands ; the three years following at Ellisland, as lessee of a farm ; and the last five years at Dumfries, where he died on July 22, 1786, in his thirty-eighth year. During the most of his life he was occupied in farm work ; during the seven years preceding his death he was an exciseman in the service of the government. His married life may be said to have commenced

\* In imagination.



with the Ellisland period. The principal portion of his works were composed during the last twelve years of his life.

Burns was a brave man and a noble genius. He shirked no duty. As a farmer and gauger he worked faithfully. He toiled, he felt, he thought, he experienced much. He had his share of sorrow and sin, regret and remorse; he had, too, his share of hope and joy, achievement and gratification. During his short life, with its hard work and poverty, his genius had time to look into the core of things, to recognize their true relations, and to express his thoughts and emotions in melodic, rhythmic poetry.

His fate was like the fate of many others to whom the world owes much—the full measure of his greatness was not taken until he was in his grave. Humanity is not to blame for its failure to reward those who greatly serve it; there are limitations upon its powers, and superb genius, to be fully understood, often must await the flight of time to develop that understanding.

The creations of his genius are now part of the heritage of the human race, and so long as mind exists, the poems and songs of Robert Burns will refine, delight, and dignify humanity. Scotchmen have the proud privilege of calling him fellow-countryman; he belongs to the world and to all time.

What are the elements of his greatness? As a man, he was courageous, just, loving, sympathetic, free, generous, democratic. As a poet, he was sincere, quick to perceive the kernel of truth, and the analogies and relations of things; sensitive, passionate, humorous, satirical, with marvellous power of poetic expression.

His genius was rich and versatile. The elements of passion, tenderness, pathos, beauty, melancholy, imagination, enter into his works. He dealt with the elemental forces of humanity, which sway prince and peasant alike. He had a vivid insight into character, masculine and feminine, exhibited with happy touches. The personality of the man flowed into his works, and we know Burns the man through his poems and songs.

Genius has been defined as that which creates, produces or invents. The Reason and the Imagination are its chief elements.

The genius of the poet sees the subtle relations of things in life and nature, and expresses the good, the true, and the beautiful in original ways. It compares, analyzes, judges, feels, imagines, and reproduces with creative originality.

Burns had sensibility, passion, insight, sense of moral truth and of justice, sympathy with all forms of nervous life, perception of beauty, reason, imagination, and a most delicate sense of rhythm and verbal expression. These qualities and faculties, combining and idealizing the impressions received from touch with matter and spirit, constituted his genius.

The poet selects the more important truths of life, and symbolizes and typifies them. The poet is the greatest of teachers, though he teaches indirectly. What a sermon is the poem "To a Mouse!" What a moral lesson is "The Address to the Unco Guid!" How beautifully the solitudes of the human mother are presented in "The Dying Words of Poor Mailie!" This man's soul touched life on all sides. He expressed all varieties of affection; he satirized canting hypocrisy and cold, unsympathetic virtue; he expressed the frolic moods of the mind in its convivial and social hours; he stirred the heart to patriotism and love of liberty. What a spirited narrative of rollicking life is "Tam O'Shanter!" What a noble declaration of the dignity of manhood is "A Man's a Man for a' That!" What knowledge of the feminine heart he shows in "Tam Glen," and in "The Braw Wooer!" What passion in "The Farewell to Clarinda!" What plaintive melancholy in "Open the Door to Me, O!" What humour in "Death and Dr. Hornbrook!" What familiarity with human life in "The Twa Dogs," and "The Brigs o' Ayr!" What satire in "The Holy Fair," and "The Ordination!" What discriminating characterization and graphic description in "Halloween!" All sincere and true, as from the heart of Nature herself.

Burns dwelt in Scotland all his life. His purpose, formed in his twenty-seventh year, to go to the West Indies, was changed by the favourable reception of the first edition of his poems, and he remained in the land of his birth.

Scotland! Land of romantic scenery and



noble history! Her rugged and indented coast is washed by sea and firth. Stream and streamlet vein her hills and dales; on her bosom dwell beautiful lakes. Land of muir and glen, mountain and heather, wild flower and bracken, gowan and laverock! Land dotted with castles and abbeys, associated with the glorious lives of the brave and the leal! There the poetic soul can find inspiration in the picturesque and beautiful in natural scenery, the heroic and noble in the historic past, the sensible and the tender in actual life. Scotland! Land of brave and honest men, of fair and gentle women, where learning and character are respected, morality and religion valued, science and literature cherished!

Burns lived in the scenes of the sufferings and triumphs of the Covenanters, a locality famous for strong Calvinism, deep and earnest discussion of the problems of foreknowledge and free will. A few clergymen and many of the better educated of the laymen sympathized with the liberal doctrines about original sin, called the New Light Doctrines; but most of the clergymen and the common people adhered to the Auld Light Doctrines. A strict formalism and an officious meddling characterized the Auld Lights. The private debauchery and public formalism of some of the Auld Lights, and the clashings of the two sects, called into being the satires of Burns upon the inconsistency of private practice with public profession in much of the life about him.

The legislative union of England and Scotland, in 1707, had destroyed the national independence of the latter country, and had almost destroyed her political existence. A close franchise prevailed, and a few members of the leading families controlled in politics. The vigorous patriotism and the strong Scottishism of Burns revived the political and literary life of Scotland.

The Muse of Auld Scotia had created many fine poetic forms. Ramsay and Ferguson had written good lyrics. The dialect of the country, with its sweet vowel sounds, and its frequent elision of harsh consonants, is adapted to poetry. Flexible and soft, like the Italian, it lends itself to picturesque power and delicate sentiment, and is a

superior vehicle for melting song. Into this noble and delicate vehicle of poetic expression, Burns, during his short life, poured his immortal genius.

That genius received its creative stimuli from the life about it, which to others was commonplace and unsuggestive. A woman deserted by her lover, was a subject for the contempt of Mrs. Grundy; her misfortune was the germ of "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon." The cant of William Fisher was offensive to his acquaintances; it caused Burns to dip his pen in truth and to write a great satire of hypocrisy in general. Wallace and Bruce were proud memories to Scotchmen; their heroism drew from Burns a grand ode to liberty and patriotism. The home of the parents of Burns was humble, and their lives were toilsome and circumscribed, but from that home he received the germinal materials which, shaped by his artistic imagination, grew into "The Cottar's Saturday Night," a beautiful idyl of contented, loving, holy family life. An old song which tickled ribald tastes, was the dunghill whence, under the husbandry of Burns's genius, sprang "John Anderson, My Jo," a splendid lyric, expressing the deep and tender affection of an old wedded pair, going, hand in hand, with cheerful love, towards the future. A few ragged beggars carousing at Poosie Nancy's tavern, excited the contempt or disgust of spectators in general; that scene, with its wild abandon, and tatterdemalion actors, will live forever in the Cantata of the "Jolly Beggars," an unparalleled collection of humorous lyrics. The coquetry of a sweetheart evoked playful comment among the many; it stirred Burns to that truthful portrayal of feminine caprice and love, "Duncan Gray cam' here to Woo." Ellison Begbie was a servant lassie, amiable and respectable; Burns loved her, and imperishably enshrined her in "On Cessnock Banks there Lives a Lass," a song full of beautiful similes and personal description. A Captain Matthew Henderson was known in the convivial society of Edinburgh; he died; his boon companions regretted the passing away of a jolly good fellow. Burns, in sublime poetry, calls upon all nature to mourn his loss.

Burns knew the movements of his own



soul. His relations to Scotland and to humanity are portrayed with touching pathos in "The Vision," in the poetic vignette of himself, "Contented wi' little and canty wi' mair," in his rhymed Epistles, and in the majestic and melancholy Lament.

The genius of Burns is not alone in ideas and emotions; it is shown in his style, in the use of natural symbols to express truth and feeling. Verbal and figurative felicities appear on every page of his poetry.

His chief work in this life was to write poetry, that is, to rhythmically express noble thought, beautiful sentiment, sincere passion, in poetic form. He wrote great poetry because of his power to conceive generic truth and to typify it in the particular.

The truths of Nature and of Life are coy and mysterious; the springs of passion and motive are hidden and involved. Genius penetrates below the surface to the heart of things. Isolated facts of daily life become interesting when shown in their relations to central truths. Genius has this power to perceive relations, to proceed from the individual to the general, from the isolated to the relative, to select the important forces and phenomena, and present them to humanity. Thus, by genius, in science and in poetry, nature and life are studied and unfolded to the mind of the race. When this power of insight is equalled by the power of artistic expression, we get such a man as Burns.

Genius is not only displayed in original discovery, but in presenting known truths in new relations, thus giving new truth. By genius the race is moulded gradually into a harmonious and sympathetic whole.

Human life is a vast and complicated drama, with countless motives, plots and actions. Individuals influence each other subtly and strongly in the interplay of emotion, intellect, and will. The apparent chaos of the mass is harmonized by the Reason and the Imagination of the philosopher and the poet. The great poet is necessarily philosopher as well, using his wisdom in harmony with his sympathy and sense of beauty.

The poet of human life deals with a subject the most complicated and elusive of all subjects. Clear insight, deep wisdom, cordial sympathy, must the poet have to understand

and interpret the varied and varying forces of the soul, with its convolutions and inter-twistings of passions, ideas and volitions.

Nature and mind are before us, but we do not see them in all their manifold operations and relations. The poet shows us what we have not seen before, and shows in new colours what we have already seen. Nature herself furnishes him symbols of thought.

Though Nature is great and interesting, it is Man in his relations to Nature, in his conceptions of his environment, in his conceptions of the supernatural, in his developments and contrasts of character, that attracts our chief interest.

"Though worlds on worlds in myriad myriads roll,  
What know we greater than the soul."

The qualities, receptive, imaginative, and expressional, necessary to understand and interpret life, Burns possessed; the results of their activity are embodied in his poetry. Nature and life are seen by us through the prism of his mind. He produced no epic or drama; his genius assumed mainly the lyric form; and as we read or hear his poems and songs, we feel the sweet, fervid, powerful personality of this, our fellow man; while we admire the genius, we love the man.

No man is perfect. Human perfection has been sought, but not found. Weeds flourish with flowers. Mortality is weak. The errors of Burns sprang from the impulses of a warm temperament, from his vibrating sensibility, his hearty conviviality—his capacity for love and friendship. He felt the charm of woman and love; he felt the glow of wit and friendship. He erred, he suffered; we sympathize, even if we condemn. His errors, melancholy, and remorse are freely revealed in his poems.

But if we think of him as the loving gallant, charmed by and charming the fair sex; if we think of him as the convivial companion, delighting and astonishing by his flashing wit and biting satire, facts warrant us also in thinking of him as the lofty patriot, the honest worker, the earnest thinker, the lover of nature, in daily communion with her; the loving husband, whose memory was fondly cherished by his widow. If we think of him as the great poet, we may also



think of him as the sorrowful, suffering man, bowing before the Almighty will, seeking Almighty aid.

We should remember that we live in a conventional society, with whose institutions and rules the passions of strong natures are often at war. When society condemns, Old Nature herself may smile contentedly at the overflow of her forces.

The passions and impulses of Burns were strong. He was no hypocrite. If his errors and sins were not seen by others, he himself confessed them with the frankness of a great soul, and in the confession we often find a justification. He was not a man of the closet or of books. He moved among men and women, hoping and feeling intensely, and by his charm and vivacity, becoming the centre of the hopes and feelings of others. Those who blame him may be silenced by his own words in the "Address to the Unco Guid."

We should not judge him harshly because he composed some coarse poems. With Burns, to feel was to write. From his higher nature came much that is noble, tender, and true. From the frolic humours produced by the Spirit of Wine and the Spirit of Love came a little of the gross and obscene. From what we know of the lower nature of humanity, which co-exists with genius as well as with commonplace human nature, it is surprising that Burns, with his irresistible impulses to express all his experiences, did not write more of the indecorous. The will can govern cold temperaments. Contrast Burns with other poets! He is the poet of natural feeling; experience at once gave him creative momentum. From this intimate connection between feeling and poetic creation, we get his great collection of poems, and if, from this law of his temperament, he was occasionally inspired by a high-kilted Scottish Muse, and wrote a few gross poems, growing out of local events, composed for the amusement of his friends, and not for publication, we ought not to seriously complain. Literary students who know the erotic and bacchanalian character of many Scottish poems written before the time of Burns, are surprised that on the whole he wrote so purely.

His sound, sunny personality comes to us through his works. In his early poems he exhibits a hearty sympathy with peasant life and manners. His rhymed epistles to his friends express with playful and familiar humour his views of life, and his personal hopes, fears and ambitions. It is manifest in these early poems that he had confidence in his poetic power. He depicted the true, the beautiful, the pathetic, the humorous, with fidelity and sympathy; he satirized the false, the hollow, the selfish, the hypocritical, with energy and contempt. The dialect of his native land was adapted to his lyric genius, but he imparted to it a grace and charm all his own.

All kinds of life appealed to him. The ourie cattle and silly sheep, out in the storm of the winter night; the unhoused mouse, the crushed gowan, the dying ewe, anxious for her young; the limping hare, victim of man's selfish sport; the faithful old mare; the unfortunate love-child, the deserted sweetheart, the melancholylover,—men and women and animals, in the sorrows and joys of life, all excited the sympathies of Burns. He had words of kindness and hope even for the de'il. No poet has written so passionately and meltingly of love, in all its varieties.

Almost all his poems are in the Scottish dialect, but his subjects are the elemental forces of life, and he appeals to the universal heart of humanity. He was a ploughman, a gauger, without classical learning or extensive reading, with nothing but the clear vision and vibrating heart, the delicate fancy and lofty imagination of genius; ever ready to receive suggestion from its environment. Many of his poems and songs were composed in the open air, with the breezes blowing upon his face, the sky, the river, the hills and dales, the trees and rills, the trembling flowers, the songs of birds, the incidents of animal and human life, all speaking their messages to him.

He seized the typical and spoke to humanity. The rigidly righteous live in Moscow as well as in Ayr. The dignity of manhood may be taught in Madrid as well as in Edinburgh. The melancholy truth that man was made to mourn saddens the exile in Siberia as well as the peasant in Scotland.



The pathos and fire of Burns's love songs touch and stir the hearts of men and women on all continents. Rough men have shed tears on the recital of his pathetic poems. Kings and queens in their palaces, nobles in their halls, merchants, tradesmen, mechanics, labourers; miners and shepherds in lonely places; soldiers at the bivouac, sailors in the fore-castle—strong men, gentle women, rollicking students, tender girls, all have felt his magic power. He has written hundreds of songs, and the song is the most touching of all forms of literature.

Although Burns in his boyhood was thought to have an unmusical ear, he developed in after life a delicate taste in rhythmic expression. His favourite practice in composing his songs was to walk amid beautiful scenery, hum a favourite tune, and fit his sentiments and words to it, culling apposite rhetorical figures from the scenery about him. He was quick to hear and retain old melodies, and to use them as the vehicles of new songs. Many old songs were refined and beautified by passing through his soul. As with Nature herself, Autumn was his ripest season.

He was the greatest poet of his time. He was also the best ploughman and mower in his neighbourhood. He delighted in feats of rustic skill and endurance. He was a virile thinker and a brilliant talker. Men and women of the intellectual and fashionable life of Edinburgh were fascinated by his powerful conceptions, his well chosen language, his magnetic personality. He met them with dignified independence; the men were instructed, the ladies charmed; his character and manners elicited both admiration and respect. The presence of ladies restrained his natural vehemence, excited his fancy and tenderness, and refined his vivacity.

Burns had a mind of large general powers, which would have fitted him for any pursuit. He became a poet, laboured earnestly in his craft, and richly did he deserve the Crown of Holly which Coila placed upon his brow.

His body was strong and well-knit; his

face noble, interesting, and expressive; his eyes fine and lustrous, glowing when he was moved by tender feeling or angry indignation; his voice was flexible, and corresponded in tone to his emotion.

He was a great poet because his moral perceptions were true. We find in him no trace of avarice, meanness, cynicism, dissimulation, servility or arrogance. Now and then we see an eddy of discontent and bitterness, soon obliterated by a stream of cheerful philosophy and courageous resolution.

His life was, from a worldly point of view, a failure. He was born poor, he lived poor, he died in debt, leaving his widow and children destitute. After the publication of the first edition of his poems, he was lauded for a season, but was comparatively neglected during his later years. But he left the world a legacy whose value cannot be measured by money standards.

Always poor, oftentimes sad and melancholy, still, from the right point of view, his life was in the highest degree a success. There are chords in the heart of humanity which will always respond to the touch of this virile and tender Master, this poet of natural emotion and universal sympathy. We hear occasionally a discordant note, but it may truthfully be said that Burns is the musical voice of the universal soul in its loftiest thoughts, strongest passions, sweetest feelings.

We describe this person and his external life, but how can we describe the mind that was within him? Oh, wonderful mystery of mind! The physical atom called Burns, being and moving in that nook of the Infinite labelled Scotland, had within it a soul, which drank at Nature's fountains, and after some subtle process within, poured its fluent genius into poem and song, which, like perennial springs, flow in to ennoble, and purify the soul universal.

Robert Burns! On this old Earth Thou wert great mortal! From this little isthmus of Time, we stretch our hands and spirit to Thee, and hail Thee, Immortal.



## XIX.—SCOTLAND'S GLORY.

*How the "25th" is celebrated in Brooklyn, N. Y.*  
 REPRINTED FROM THE *BROOKLYN CITIZEN*.

OVER three hundred Scotch men and women celebrated last night in Bartholdi Hall, Brooklyn, the anniversary of the birth of Burns. The affair was under the auspices of the Greenpoint Burns Club. The distinguishing Scotch trait, thoroughness, came out strong in the celebration. Most of the people got to the hall at 7 o'clock last night, and a great many stayed until that time this morning. Between this period they enjoyed an excellent dinner, listening to some very able addresses, heard once more the songs of their childhood, saw the Highland fling danced in costume, and then, about 1 a.m., evened up matters by beginning to dance down an order which contained twenty dances, mainly Highland schottisches, reels and caledonians.

But then the birthday of Burns comes but once a year, and the thrifty and hardworking Scotch people try to crowd the pleasures of months into that one night. In some respects, too, Burns's day is something more than the mere celebration of a great poet's birth. In the nature of events it has become the national holiday of the whole Scotch people, and it is celebrated with something of the patriotic fervour which makes the Fourth of July unique among American holidays.

The banqueting hall was a picturesque and pleasing sight along about 9 o'clock, after the Rev. Dr. Sproul had said grace, and President Kellock had given the signal for the dinner to begin. The bare pillars and posts were hidden under a drapery of bunting and flags of all nations, and over the guests' table hung a picture of the poet. Five long tables, each of which extended the full length of the hall, were crowded with the diners, little family groups, father, mother, daughter; fine, sturdy, hardy, intelligent-looking men, neat and handsome women. No person present last night will hereafter put any faith in the prevailing fallacy that the Scotch are a homely race. Neither will they believe with Sydney Smith that a Scotchman requires a surgical operation to comprehend a joke. Sydney had reference probably to English jokes. Cer-

tainly, the jokes that were made last night by Assistant District Attorney Clarke "caught on," as they say in the theatre.

After some appropriate remarks by President Kellock, the Herald Glee Club sang "Hail to the Chief," and then the Hon. Mr. Thomas E. Pearsall responded to the first toast of the evening, "Robert Burns." Mr. Pearsall spoke with fluency and feeling, and his hearers showered him with well merited applause. He said:—Allow me to say that I am pleased to see so many enthusiastic and intelligent men and women assembled to-night to give expression to their national feelings for the illustrious Robert Burns; to do honour to the shrine of the humble, unassuming ploughman whose name has become a household word in our land. Every Scotchman and true admirer of Burns have bowed with enthusiasm at the matchless power of his magic pen. His birthday is celebrated in every land, and whenever it is observed throughout our own country his many warm-hearted admirers do honour to his great genius. Fairer faces and a more charming assembly of men and women do not always grace the festive board, and we are gathered here to-night to honour the natal day of Robert Burns—him

The chief of Bards that swell  
 The heart with songs of social flame  
 And high delicious revelry.

One hundred and thirty-one years have rolled away since the birth of Robert Burns, and more than ninety-three years since his death. I think we may safely say, that as long as the Scottish dialect lasts his name and fame will be co-equal therewith. The universal admiration and high esteem in which he is held is marvellous; it extends to every part of the world where Scotchmen are to be found, and indeed, ladies and gentlemen, where are they not to be found? In the principal cities of this country there are "Burns clubs," the members of which assemble every year to express their admiration for the great minstrel, and at the very moment



while we are here indulging in these expressions they are doing the same. The poems of Burns are to be found in the homes of almost every Scotchman, and we may hazard the assertion that there exists no son or daughter of Caledonia, wherever they dwell, who is not a better and nobler being by having read the biography and productions of Robert Burns. Vast indeed must have been his power over the human soul, for his works are not confined to the homes of his countrymen only, whose manners and dialect he has forever embalmed in verse, but they are met with in the well selected library of everyone who knows the English language, and possesses any degree of taste for gems of fine sentiment. But the love which a Scotchman bears for the memory of the Ayrshire bard is unsurpassed, and perhaps cannot be compared in its intensity with that felt by the native of any other land. One would almost think that the mantle of inspiration had fallen on him when in one of his humorous songs he said :

He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',  
But aye a heart aboon them a':  
He'll be a credit till us a',  
We'll a' be proud o' Robin.

But when he speaks directly to man and of man, how manly is the sentiment and how elevating and hopeful are the well-known words in which he vindicates the dignity, ay, the majesty of manhood.

The rank is but the guinea stamp,  
The man's the gowd for a' that.

And who does not recollect the chivalrous compliment he paid the fair creation, when alluding to the bountiful manner in which nature had lavished on them so many charms

Her prentice hand she tried on man,  
And then she made the lasses, O !

One of the most marked features in our poet's character and writings is his love of country. Listen how touchingly he gives utterance to his early feelings, and they remained with him to the last. He had—

A wish, that to my latest hour  
Will strongly heave my breast ;  
That I for puir auld Scotland's sake,  
Some uséfu' plan or beuk could make,  
Or sing a sang at least.

And, sir, did he not sing a song, did he not, for poor old Scotland's sake, sing a song that has rendered himself and his country celebrated throughout the world? In every relation of life we find ourselves associated with the poetry of Burns. In love and happiness, in sorrow and care he carries us away, and is really and truly the poet of the people. Meeting with old friends brings up the days of "auld lang syne." If laden with care and sadness we remember that—

The poor oppressed honest man  
Had surely ne'er been born  
Had there not been a recompense  
To comfort those that mourn

But if we find sympathy in our sadness and despondency, to what a pitch does our mirth go when led on by Burns ; what a fund of pleasure do we derive from his "Hallow-e'en;" his "Cottar's Saturday Night," and above all his "Tam O'Shanter," and who does not sympathize with honest Tam and with the witches in full chase, shrieking :

" Ah, Tam, ah, Tam, thou'lt get thy fairin',  
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin',  
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin',  
Kate soon will be a waefu' woman."

But thanks to Maggie's heels, the "Keystone of the brig" is won and Tam is safe. But I will continue and remark, Burns is peculiarly the poet of the people, the poet of the working man. Born to a life of poverty and toil, he knew by sad experience the many woes and hardships which are incident to a lowly condition of life. In his writings, their sentiments, their feelings find the most earnest utterance. There are passages in Burns which none but a poor man could have written ; passages which none but the working man can fully appreciate. Such passages are to be found in "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "Man was made to mourn," and above all, in that noblest and best of songs, "A man's a man for a' that." I cannot pause to give specimens of the tender and passionate poetry of Burns. He, like other poets, was a being of impulse and feeling ; he had strong passions which sometimes misled him, but his heart was always tender, and he had a generous nature ; with all his love for social pleasures his anxieties were for others, and he had learned the true secret of happiness. Where



does he place the scene of his highest duties and his dearest joys—

To make a happy fireside clime to weans and wife  
That's the true pathos and sublime of human life.

Robert Burns had only attained his 37th year when he died. Let us think of this if we would estimate rightly what he accomplished. Dying at the age of 37 Milton would have left us no "Paradise Lost" or "Regained," and Pope would have left unaccomplished the poems on which chiefly rest his fame. Burns has bequeathed to us his songs, and that is fame enough to win for him the poet's immortality. His songs are already a part of the language of our common race, and may not our hearts thrill within us this night as we think that the same songs are being sung wherever the English language is spoken, in the homes of Scotland, Ireland, England and America is heard this night that inspired song:

Then let us pray that, that come it may  
As come it will for a' that,  
That man to man, the world o'er,  
Shall brothers be for a' that.

So this night let everyone say to his neighbour, be he Irish, English, American or Scotch:

Then, gies a hand, my trusty friend,  
And here's a hand o' mine.

Mr. Thomas McQueen next sang "There was a lad was born in Kyle," and for an encore, "Rob Roy McGregor."

The second toast of the evening was "Scotland," and the response was by Mr. Andrew McLean, who was introduced by President Kellock as a gentleman who needs no introduction to any Brooklyn gathering. Mr. McLean was received with great applause, and after some general remarks, appropriate to the occasion, spoke as follows:

Scotland has so long been favoured with the goodwill of all enlightened men that eulogy or defence is now no part of the duty of her children. As she is everywhere numbered among the world's benefactors, the chief obligation imposed upon her numerous offspring is to bear themselves in a manner worthy of their origin. Traditions, luminous with the light of lofty lives, put to shame the Scotchman who stoops to ignoble behaviour.

The son may need defence, but never the motherland, whose blue eyes have ever beamed with the radiance of a stainless spirit. What is it that an occasion like this, in speaking to the toast of Scotland, calls for beyond a gentle play upon the strings of memory? The best possible response to Scotland, placed as we are, is in the songs of Scotland. To bring before your minds the cloud-capped mountains, the silvery lakes, the rivers that make music as they run, the valour of your ancestors, the flowers that sweeten the glens and redden the moors, the birds that sing in shady dells or rise to the invisible with melody on their wings, the lovely forms and still more lovely hearts of Scottish women, the pleasures of the fireside, the joys of youth, the struggles of maturity, the companionship of auld lang syne, how can these be recalled in any way so vividly as by the minstrel's spell! Scotland is enveloped in poetry as the stars of the morning and of evening are in light. She cannot in any adequate sense, be seen at all except through the atmosphere of the bard's imagination. No statistics, no matter of fact record can make Scotland understandable, for these deal but with her skeleton, or rather with what may be termed the geology of her character. She is a living thing, and we must have our account of her not from any dissecting table, but from eyes that have dwelt enraptured on the beauty of her face, from ears that have drank in the sweet tones of her voice, and from hearts that have lain upon her bosom and felt the throbbing of her deathless pulse. Scotland is great in many ways. She is renowned in arms. The enterprise of her sons has been seen on every ocean. The triumphs of her mechanical skill have lightened the burdens of labour in every clime. Her philosophers have shrunk from no problem and left few dark questions uncleared by their piercing vision. To all that distinguishes civilized from uncivilized men she has contributed her full share. Wherever the sailor breasts a tempest, wherever a steam engine multiplies the energies of industry, wherever education is prized or liberty of thought held in honour, in all the spheres of material and mental action, there men have occasion to think with gratitude of the mountain and the flood. But she is dear



to her children for other reasons than these. Before their eyes she swims a vision of beauty and nobleness and maternal dignity, such as the heart alone can make vivid and eternal excellencies beget. There are two Scotlands, one of the body and the other of the soul. The material Scotland all men may understand if they will; but the immortal Scotland, the Scotland with a title to live forever, can be disclosed only to those who have mastered the wizard language of the muses. The latter is the Scotland with which we are concerned to-night. We drink to the land upon which the spell of Burns has been laid, the land of "Tam o' Shanter" and "Highland Mary," of Robert Bruce and "Bonny Jean," of the "Jolly Beggars" and the "Cottar's Saturday Night." Not the Clyde, with its forests of masts, but the Doon and the Nith and the Forth and the Yarrow, with their freight of supernal music, are the rivers of our affection. We honour the skill which has made barren rocks fruitful and waste places fair with the homes of a thrifty and prosperous people, but to-night we submit ourselves to the gentler sway of Campbell and Wilson, of Tannahill and the Ettrick Shepherd, of Hector McNeil and Allan Ramsay, of Fergusson and Smollett, and of the genius at whose call the forms of Roderick Dhu and Rob Roy, of Douglas and Marmion, of Dundee and the Lady of the Lake, started into life.

Oh, blessed forever be dear, old Scotland! May the sunlight always be glad to play around her granite summits and the moon delight to blend with her lochs at night. May no time ever come when the red of her heather shall not typify unyielding valour, or the fragrance of her bluebells cease to signify the tenderness of her gentle daughters! Far be the hour when the gowan in her fields shall not as now symbolize the virtues of a virtuous common people. Through all the ages, on till the last when the frame of nature shall be folded away as a vesture, may the lark represent the soaring spirit of her children, the eagle as he looks boldly from his eyrie into the full blaze of noon be an emblem of their fearless minds, and the music of the harps which have charmed the world in her name continue to be translated into lofty and harmonious deeds!

The Glee Club now sang "Robin Adair." The applause which greeted them had hardly died away when Master Norman McLachlan, a handsome little boy dressed in full highland costume, bounded upon the stage and, much to the edification and amusement of the guests and members, danced a highland fling. The boy's graceful movements were repeatedly applauded, and at the close he was presented with a basket of flowers.

The third toast of the evening, "The United States," was responded to by Postmaster Hendrix. Mr. Hendrix was loudly applauded as he arose to speak. He said that they had undoubtedly received great satisfaction from the reminiscences of Burns as given by the first speaker. They had the rare privilege of having told to them in high and lofty strain that which to Scottish hearts was forever dear. They had listened to songs which have stirred the pulse, quickened the memory and warmed the heart. If there was one subject in the realm of all subjects to be presented on an occasion of this kind, any fit to be a continuance of what had gone before, it was the one of their adopted country. Their gifted countrymen in describing Scotland had told them that there were two Scotlands, the Scotland of the body and the Scotland of the soul, the Scotland of fact and the Scotland of fancy. As adopted citizens of the great Republic they were brought face to face with fact. The United States insured them liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It was a remarkable fact that so many peoples were assimilated and identified with our institutions. Yet all the time they retained the fondest and dearest memories of their native land and yet were not one whit the less loyal to their adopted home. Long before Columbus started out, long before the Norwegians broke through Finland and came down upon the New England coast, the United States were here in all their material aspect and in all their natural grandeur. As far as the purposes of his toast were concerned, the transformation of this continent had begun and continued in 100 years. What did it all was the introduction of the best blood of the enterprising spirits, who desired only that which this country seemed to afford, liberty and progress. This was a union of peoples



as well as of States. We did not sometimes appreciate what America was. The grumblers were ready to erect barriers to keep out the peoples of the world from coming here as fast as they have. As a matter of statistics the population was using only one-fifth of our whole land. They would always extend a hearty hand of welcome to as many people from Scotland as chose to come here. They objected only to those who came with hatred in their hearts and assassination in their souls to the flag they loved. All nationalities were welcome, but when the hateful and hatred face of anarchy showed itself they felt a rebellion toward it which would not rest until it was expelled from their shores and out of American life. It did not belong here; it had no place here. Americans had a righteous determination to put anarchy down, and it would not live an hour longer than slavery was allowed to exist after the American people were thoroughly aroused. The speaker did

not believe that things were better fifty years ago. He believed in to-day.

"We will associate ourselves with your songs," said Mr. Hendrix in an eloquent peroration; we will let the bluebells ring in our ears; we will catch something of the perfume of the heather; but when sentiment is exhausted, let me ask you to turn to the Stars and Stripes and say three cheers for the red white and blue."

The Herald Glee Club sang "America," and Assistant District Attorney Clark, in the absence of Mr. Ridgway, spoke to the last toast "The Lasses," in a humorous vein, and Mr. Alexander Glass wound up this part of the festivities with "When the Kye Comes Hame."

The floor was then cleared for dancing, which was kept up until morning.

The following are the officers of the club—James Kellock, president; James Dickson, vice-president; Robert McNeil, treasurer; George Glass, secretary.

## XX.—WHY BURNS IS HONOURED.

NEVER was poet so honoured after his death as Burns; and yet there have been many greater poets. How has he gained such an inheritance of love? Because he was the truest and most genuine of men. Because his eye flashed through all clothes adornments, stars and garters—all the splendid or obscure hulls in which the human being may enwrap itself, believing that "A man's a man for a' that." Because to him there was nothing low or mean in nature; nothing to be despised in man but falsity and lack of generosity. Because he had a love and tenderness for common things such as poets never before exhibited—a love deep as that of Nature's herself, who stains the moss on a peasant's roof-tree with an emerald surpassing the velvets of kings, and who, with equal care, gives her crimson to the tip of the daisy and her splendour to the evening star. Burns believed in the inherent dignity of man. Ramsay, for instance, did not. In the "Gentle Shepherd," beautiful pastoral as it is, Patie and Peggie are too good to have been born "in huts where poor men lie," and, to

satisfy the poetic wigmaker's sense of the fitness of things, they are discovered to be scions of a noble house. *That* explained their delicate sentiments; that explained their gentleness of manner; that explained the grace with which they danced on the village green. Nature is strong, but noble blood is stronger. Burns did not abhor this weakness and folly of Ramsay, for he could not understand it. It was incomprehensible to his poetic mood. *He* never played false to his order in that way. In the "Cottar's Saturday Night" there is displayed a dignity and nobility of manner, a seriousness and reverence of spirit, far surpassing in worth the more florid accomplishments of Ramsay's *pseudo* shepherd and shepherdess, although the actors are but toilers of the earth. Jenny wins her "penny fee," and the pure blush of love is on her cheek; the face of the "priest-like father" is furrowed with care, and brown with wind and rain, and when the chapter is read, hands hard with the mattock and the plough-shaft are clasped in prayer. This is the way that Burns ennobles poverty and



makes it honorable ; and when he himself breaks in upon the scene, it is with a fervent prayer that however "crown and coronets be rent," men and women like these, dutiful sons and daughters, pious and provident fathers and mothers, may never die out of Scotland. For these constitute a nation's strength ; out of these rise the golden pinnacles of an empire ; these give battle flags to abbey and cathedral. These give splendour to the reigns of kings, and victories to the page of history.

Burns's way of life led him among common people and common objects, and his "lofty" spirit "sanctified the mean." His song never deserted these things. His humour overflowed in "Halloween," and the "gangrel bodies" that assembled nightly at the Mauchline tavern. He sang of the daisy and the mouse, his "freen' and fellow mortal," whose nest in the furrow had been destroyed by the ploughshare. His pity extends to the sheep "smooored" in the snow-drift, and the bird

sitting with "chittering wing" on the frozen branch. He listens to the colloquy of the "twa dogs ; he writes Anacreontics on "yill ;" he apostrophizes the "haggis ;" he leaves the seraphim burning before the throne, and, in one of his most wonderful pieces, addresses the *Deil* of Scottish tradition, in the strangest mixture of terror, humour, pity and pathos ; and the long list of his songs contain the purest love poetry in the world. He is popular beyond any other poet, because beyond any other poet he felt that poetry did not belong to man's environments, but to man himself. He shed poetic glory on the poor man's life, on his labour, on the meal on his table, on his rare festivals, on his death and burial. For this he inherits the love and gratitude of millions, for he has taught them self-respect, he has made their virtues visible to the world, he has sweetened all their family relations, and he has given an immortal voice to their emotions.—*Edinburgh Weekly Herald*.

#### XXI.—BURNS'S DESCENDANTS IN 1893.

MRS. Mary S. J. Hutchison, Cleuchbrae Cottage, Mouswald, Dumfriesshire, writes as follows, March 1893,—My attention has been drawn to a paragraph in regard to Burns's legitimate descendants. The truth and accuracy of the following I can vouch for. Sarah Burns, now Mrs. Hutchison, and Burns's granddaughter, I have known from a child. She lived with her grandmother, in whose house I have been, until Mrs. Burns died. It is she who is painted with her grandmother. She is the eldest daughter of Colonel James Glencairn Burns by his first wife. By his second wife he had also a daughter, now Miss Burns. The two sisters live in Cheltenham, 23 Berkeley Street. At

present they are at 4 Charlotte Row, Weymouth. I had a letter from Mrs. Hutchison this morning. Mrs. Hutchison's husband died in Australia a few years ago. Her family consists of Annie, now Mrs. Scott, in Australia, who has no family ; Robin (in Chicago), who is married, and was nearly killed last June, but, contrary to all expectation, has recovered and able to go to his office ; Violet, now Mrs. Gowing, in Birkhamstead ; Margaret, or, as she is generally called, "Daisy," who is the youngest, and strikingly resembles her great-grandfather, or, rather, any of his likenesses I have seen. Burns's son Robert had a daughter, who lived in Ireland. I do not know if she is living, but think not.

#### XXII.—AT THE SHRINE OF BURNS.

*By WILLIAM ALLAN, author of "A Book of Poems," etc., etc.*

SLEEP, Patriot Bard, sleep on ! thy honoured  
dust  
Lies here in peace, thy country's sacred trust,  
Yet not alone thy country's, for thou art

Enshrined in every freedom-loving heart,  
And wheresoe'er the patriot cry is heard,  
The soul which filled thee hath that bosom  
stirred.



Where far Columbia's lonely forests wave  
 I've seen thy spirit brooding o'er the brave,  
 Then every breast was filled with courage  
     high,  
 And every heart felt but to "do or die,"  
 Inspired to battle-deeds which shook the  
     world  
 Till Slavery's flag low in the dust was hurled;  
 Oft by the Potomac's dark-rolling streams  
 Columbia's patriot sons beheld thy dreams,\*  
 And felt the sacred fire of Freedom glow,  
 Which conquering laid "the proud usurpers  
     low,"  
 And swept away "Oppression's woes and  
     pains,"  
 While freemen's hands struck off all "servile  
     chains."

Sleep, Patriot Bard! yon sun which shines  
     above,  
 Nor brighter is, nor greater than my love  
 For thee, and all that thou hast done to  
     make  
 Earth's tyrants tremble, and her despots  
     quake.  
 Death cannot still thy voice. Time but pro-  
     longs  
 Th' eternal numbers of thy deathless songs,  
 Which cheer the lowly, raise the drooping  
     heart,  
 And to the honest poor new hopes impart,  
 And fill the coward breast with valour's fire,  
 And make the brave to braver deeds aspire,  
 And in the ears of earth's down-trodden  
     throng

Proclaim triumphant Right and conquered  
     Wrong,  
 And sound with thunder tones God's primal  
     plan—  
 The Universal Brotherhood of Man.

Sleep on, Immortal One! thou sleepest well,  
 Amid the scenes where Genius flung her  
     spell;  
 The "cottar's home" still hears the fervent  
     prayer  
 Which "honest men and bonnie lasses"  
     share;  
 The "ruined kirks" declare thy scenes of hell,  
 The "groaning trees" thy witches howling  
     tell;  
 The "murmuring streams" thy tunefulness  
     proclaim,  
 The "modest flowers" breathe forth their  
     lover's name,  
 The "little birds" still chant thy kindred  
     lays,  
 Thy songful spirit haunts the "banks and  
     braes,"  
 While I, with love and pride, a pilgrim here,  
 Shed on thy storied tomb affection's tear,  
 And give the homage of my heart to thee,  
 Thou great Hierophant of Liberty.

Sleep, Patriot Bard! Adieu! thy honoured  
     dust  
 Lies here in peace, thy Scotland's sacred  
     trust;  
 Yet not alone old Scotland's, for thou art  
 Enshrined in every freedom-loving heart.

### XXIII.—THE BURNS STATUE AT ALBANY, N. Y.

BY D. M. HENDERSON, BALTIMORE, M.D.

'Tis he, our Burns in bronze made manifest—  
 The subtlest ken, the inmost secret caught,  
 Disclosed of art, by cunning fingers wrought,  
 The heart's ideal, ne'er till now expressed!  
 'Tis he, in truth, the years that try and test—  
 The kind, cruel years, that winnow work and  
     thought—  
 Bequeath us this. The weak is all forgot.  
 This is our Burns, our strongest, tenderest!

No more to Bonnie Doon, and winding Ayr,  
 And the kirkyard, Dumfries, the pilgrim  
     turns—  
 No more to these alone—the past is there,  
 The sacred dust, the memory of Burns;  
 Here too, a shrine is hallowed, and men pay  
 Their homage to the bard, alive for aye!

\* During the Civil War in America, I have heard the soldiers of the Union and Confederate armies singing our Scotch songs.



## XXIV.—BURNS AS A SONG WRITER.

BY GEORGE SAVAGE.

*Extract from an address delivered January 25th, 1888, before the Caledonian Club of Baltimore, Maryland.*

THE highest rank must be awarded Burns as a song writer. Thomas Carlyle, ever critical and chary of praise, wrote that Burns's songs were "by far the best that Britain has yet produced," and added: "Independent of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades his poetry, his songs are honest in another point of view—in form as well as in spirit. They do not affect to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music. They have received their life and fashioned themselves in the medium of harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. If we further take into account the immense variety of his subjects, how from the loud flowing revel in "Willie brew'd a peck o' maut," to the still rapt enthusiasm for "Mary in Heaven;" from the glad, kind greeting of "Auld Lang Syne," or the comic archness of "Duncan Gray," to the fire-eyed fury of "Scots wha' hae wi' Wallace bled," he has found a tune and words for every mood of man's heart, it will seem small praise if we rank him as the first of all our song writers, for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

At an early age Burns showed his love for songs, though he could never sing, and his voice remained to the last untunable. A collection of songs came into his possession when he was but a lad, and he wrote: "I pored over them driving my cart or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse, carefully noting the true, tender or sublime from affectation and fustian. I am convinced that

I owe to this practice much of my critic craft, such as it is." His fame would be enduring if he had written only the songs of which Carlyle speaks so highly.

"Let me write the songs of a people and you may make its laws," said Fletcher; and we may well claim that Burns by his songs alone, left not only upon Scotland but upon Britain an impress more durable and valuable than that of any legislator. His songs, numbering nearly three hundred, have become celebrated, and many of them are as familiar as household words in Scotland and England, and they are known and appreciated wherever the English language is spoken. Wherever the joy and the woe of existence are felt, alike in hut and hall, on land and sea, the spirit of Robert Burns as it is contained in his songs is ever present to cheer and bless. It is claimed by some that he will ultimately be remembered chiefly as a song writer, and if he had contributed only his songs to literature he would surely occupy a high portion as a poet and, as such, a benefactor. We find in his lyrical passions "harmony as perfect as the song of the linnet and the thrush piping to a summer evening of peace on earth and glory in the western sky," and "whatever the poet's eye has seen of beauty, or his heart has felt of mirth or sadness or madness, melts into it and becomes a tone, a chord of music of which but for one singer the world would hardly have known the power to thrill the universal heart."

## XXV.—ISOBEL BURNS.

REPRINTED FROM *THE EDINBURGH EVENING DISPATCH*.

It is almost a commonplace to say that the name of Burns is a household word all over the world. In spite of all that has been written and spoken of the poet, the interest in anything attaching to his name shows no

sign of diminution. It rather seems to grow with the advance of years, and the breaking of the links that bind the present to his generation.

There has just been published for private



circulation, by Mr. Robert Burns Begg, of Kinross, a short memoir of his grandmother, Isobel Burns (Mrs. Begg), which gives us pleasing glimpses of the home life of the poet hitherto unpublished. With a few extracts from this interesting work we have pleasure in furnishing our readers. Isobel was the youngest member of the family of William Burness, having been born at Mount Oliphant in 1771; and at her death in December 1858, at the age of eighty-eight, the last of that Ayrshire family, the type of the "Cottar's Saturday Night," disappeared from this earthly scene. It was no ordinary household. Though their lot was poverty and toil, "their superior intelligence and refinement, and a certain air of self-respect which they bore amidst all the common drudgeries of their situation, caused them to be looked upon as people of a superior sort. Country neighbour who happened to enter their family-room at the dinner hour were surprised to find them all—father, brothers, sisters—sitting with a book in one hand, while they used their spoons with the other." On the removal of the family to Mossgiel farm, where Robert Burns, on the death of his father, had to bear the burden of responsibility, his youngest sister, Isobel, was twelve years his junior. Between the two a strong bond of affinity seems to have been formed. "I can never forget my brother," she long afterwards said. "I was just twelve when my father was taken away, and Robert was both father and brother to me." During the four years which the poet spent under the family roof at Mossgiel, before going to Ellisland in 1788, "his sister was deeply interested in his poetic flights. She was much in his confidence, and being gifted with considerable musical taste and a sweet voice, he frequently utilised her services by causing her to sing over to him the songs he was engaged in composing. She was also in the habit of making herself familiar with the other effusions on which he was at this period exercising his poetic fancy. In her old age she used often to relate how the poet was in the habit of hurrying through his midday meal at Mossgiel in order that he might, before resuming his afternoon's work, commit to writing in the privacy of his own and his brother Gilbert's sleeping apartment—an attic room

above the kitchen—the verses which his fancy had suggested during his outdoor labours in the earlier part of the day. These were generally written on a slate, and in his absence his young sister was in the habit of stealing up to his room and greedily devouring her brother's poetic fancies from day to day." Hers was probably the first eye which discerned the glow of the rising luminary, as "alike from her own poetic temperament and her natural discrimination of taste, she was peculiarly fitted to appreciate at their true value the richness and beauty of sentiment breathed in her brother's early 'woodnotes wild.'" We quote from the book:—

"Mrs. Begg, too, used to relate with much enjoyment a domestic incident at Lochlea which revealed her father and his gifted son in a very real and characteristic light. In the winter of 1781-82, while Burns was paying court to the earliest of his many successive divinities, Ellison Begbie, who lived on the banks of Cessnock, about two miles from Lochlea, his father became naturally alarmed at the lateness of the hour at which his son occasionally returned home. In order to administer a fitting rebuke to his son, the father one night insisted on sitting up for him. When, therefore, the youthful bard at length appeared, he found his father in waiting, and in his severest admonitory mood. On being asked the reason for his detention to such a late hour, the son began at once to give his father so humorous and fanciful a description of his experiences and difficulties in his journey homewards, that the old man became interested and amused by the recital, and not only forgot entirely the intended rebuke, but actually continued sitting at the side of the kitchen fire for two hours longer enjoying his son's fascinating conversation."

"Mrs. Begg's recollections of her mother were, like those which she fondly treasured of her father, fraught with the deepest filial reverence and affection, although they were of a somewhat less idealistic character. . . . One incident illustrative of her mother's devotion as a wife, as well as of her natural energy of character, she used to relate with much feeling. It occurred after her father's naturally vigorous constitution had begun to be weakened by the gradual approach of the



illness which cut him off. Coming in one day weary and exhausted from sowing, he found he had used up all his thrashed-out grain, and was desirous to provide some for his horses' midday 'feed.' His worthy help-mate, however, insisted that he should refresh himself with a rest, while she herself proceeded to the barn, accompanied by her servant girl, Lizzie Paton, and, vigorously wielding the flail, thrashed out and winnowed as much grain as was required."

In 1793, six years after the poet had left the paternal roof, Isobel was married to John Begg, a young farmer in the parish of Sorn. Receiving an appointment in 1810 as factor to Mr. Hope Vere, of Blackwood, in Lanarkshire, he settled down there with his young family of nine children, in comfortable circumstances; but, unfortunately, he was killed in 1813 by an accidental fall from his horse. By this sad event Mrs. Begg found herself a widow with a large family entirely dependent upon her for support. The story of her struggle to maintain them in respectability is a touching one. Two of her sons, William and Robert, became teachers. She herself kept a school first at Ormiston and afterwards at Tranent, maintaining herself and family by her own honourable industry and that of her daughters, Agnes and Isabella. The memoir contains a number of interesting letters to her son Robert in Kinross, expressed in language which for grace and ease of diction and force of expression might almost have flowed from the pen of the poet himself. In 1842, by the efforts of Lord Houghton, Thomas Carlyle, Dr. Robert Chambers, and others, a fund was provided by the admirers of Burns, which, with the addition of a pension granted by the Queen, secured for Mrs. Begg an income sufficient to provide for the comfort of her old age. In the following year, largely through the interested efforts of Dr. R. Chambers, she and her two daughters removed to the picturesque cottage near the river Doon, not far from the poet's monument. There she lived till her death, in December 1858, with her daughters Agnes and Isabella, the last fifteen years of her life being brightened by much domestic happiness, and by the pleasing society of many warm and interested friends. By these and

by many visitors from a distance, whom admiration for Burns attracted to Ayr, her cottage was much frequented. "Under her lowly roof she received visitors of widely differing grades, including many of the first literary men and women of the day, and not unfrequently the conversations which took place within her comfortable little parlour were as sparkling and bright as those which fancy associates with the brilliant *salons* of the titled leaders of society. Her recollections of the poet were vivid and distinct, although they were limited almost exclusively to the years of her youth."

She was gifted with a wonderful power of memory, and was able to repeat with unerring accuracy not only her brother's best known poems, but also many favourite selections from the other poets. Of her numerous stories for children, there was none in more frequent request than a fable which she used to relate illustrative of the numerous and varied lures which bestrew life's pathway. This fable she first learned by hearing it recited by the poet to his younger brothers and sisters at the fireside of Lochlea during the long winter evenings, and her firm conviction was that it was composed by Burns for the amusement of herself and the other juvenile members of her father's household. As such the little story is here given at full length, as it discloses Burns's genius in a novel but not the less deeply interesting and fascinating aspect. The story has already appeared in Chambers's "Nursery Rhymes of Scotland," as written down by the genial and talented author from Mrs. Begg's recital. It was also published many years ago as a Christmas story for children, with a series of excellent illustrations, by "J. B." a then youthful artist, son of Mrs. Hugh Blackburn; and as Burns' authorship has never been disputed, and no trace of the story has been found outside the Burns family circle, it may now be safely assumed that Mrs. Begg was correct in her conviction. Indeed, the very phraseology of the story seems of itself to indicate its authorship.

#### MARRIAGE OF ROBIN REDBREAST AND JENNY WREN.

"There was an auld gray Poussie Baudrons, and she gaed awa' down by a water side, and



there she saw a wee Robin Redbreast happin' on a brier; and Poussie Baudrons says, 'Where's tu gaun, wee Robin?' And wee Robin says, 'I'm gaun awa' to the king to sing him a sang this good Yule morning.' And Poussie Baudrons says, 'Come here, wee Robin, and I'll let you see a bonny white ring round my neck.' But wee Robin says, 'Na, na! gray Poussie Baudrons; na, na! ye worry't the wee mousie, but ye'se no worry me.' So wee Robin flew awa' till he came to a fail fauld-dike, and there he saw a gray greedy gled sitting. And the gray greedy gled says, 'Where's tu gaun, wee Robin?' And wee Robin says, 'I'm gaun awa' to the king to sing him a sang this gude Yule morning.' And gray greedy gled says, 'Come here, wee Robin, and I'll let ye see a bonny feather in my wing.' But wee Robin says, 'Na, na! gray greedy gled; na, na! Ye pookit a' the wee lintie, but ye'se no pook me.' So wee Robin flew awa' till he came to the cleuch o' craig, and there he saw sleet Tod Lowrie sitting. And sleet Tod Lowrie says, 'Where's tu gaun, wee Robin?' And wee Robin says, 'I'm gaun awa' to the king to sing him a sang this gude Yule morning.' And sleet Tod Lowrie says, 'Come here, wee Robin, and I'll let you see a bonny spot on the tap o' my tail.' But wee Robin says, 'Na, na! sleet Tod Lowrie; na, na! Ye worry't the wee lammie, but ye'se no worry me.' So wee Robin flew awa' till he came to a bonny burnside, and there he saw a wee callant sitting. And the wee callant says, 'Where's tu gaun, wee Robin?' And wee Robin says, 'I'm gaun awa' to the king to sing him a sang this gude Yule morning.' And the wee callant says, 'Come here, wee Robin, and I'll gie you a wheen grand moolins out o' my pouch.' But wee Robin says, 'Na, na! wee callant; na, na! Ye speldert the gowdspink, but ye'se no spelder me.' So wee Robin flew awa' till he came to the king, and there he sat on a winnock sole and sang the king a bonny sang. And the king says to the queen, 'What'll we gie to wee Robin for singing us this bonny sang?' And the queen says to the king, 'I think we'll gie him the wee wran to be his wife.' So wee Robin and the wee wran were married, and the king and the queen and a' the court danced at the waddin':

syne he flew awa' hame to his ain waterside, and happit on a brier."

"With all Mrs. Begg's love for children, her treatment of them never failed to be characterised by that sound, practical common sense and discrimination which she invariably exhibited in other affairs of life, and her fondness was never allowed to degenerate into anything like weak or blinded indulgence.

. . . One instance of her practical views in regard to the chastisement of very young children will suffice. When her son Robert's young wife had her first child, the old lady, as early as possible, paid a lengthened visit to her son's house for the purpose of making the acquaintance of the 'highly important' little stranger, and as usual, on such interesting occasions, the bathing of the baby formed the great event of the day in the eyes of the fond mother and not less fond grandmother. One morning, while engaged in this interesting occupation, the conversation naturally turned to the punishment of young children, the young mother expressing her wonder how any mother could ever have the heart to administer chastisement for the *first* time to her child; for her part, she felt as if she could never succeed in convincing herself that the proper time had really arrived for such treatment. 'Oh, my dear,' said the practical old lady, 'you need be under no difficulty as to that. If it's really needed, ye canna err in beginning as soon as the bottom's as braid's your loof.'" We again quote:—

"Little more than a year after she had established herself in her new abode at Ayr, she was called upon to take part in the great festival of 6th August, 1844, organised for the purpose of according to the sons of Burns a national welcome to the 'Banks of the Doon.'

. . . The demonstration excited an amount of interest and enthusiasm far exceeding the most sanguine expectations of its promoters. Crowds of the poet's enthusiastic admirers, not only from all parts of Scotland, but even from England and Ireland, flocked to the 'auld clay biggin' to do homage to his genius, until, as stated in the newspapers of the day, the vast concourse of people could not be estimated at less than 80,000. Along with the sons of the poet Mrs. Begg was assigned a prominent part in the cere-



monies of the day. They occupied conspicuous positions on a platform erected for the purpose close to the now famous 'Auld Brig o' Doon,' and the vast procession, nearly a mile in length, passed in front of this platform on its way from Burns's cottage to the pavilion in which the festival was to be held. It must have been a proud and gratifying occasion to the sons of Burns, and who can doubt that it was equally, if not even more so, to his now aged sister? As she stood there at the side of her nephews, surrounded by the Earl of Eglinton, the chairman on the occasion, Professor Wilson (Christopher North), the croupier, and many other noble and distinguished men and women from all parts of the United Kingdom and the sister isle, and as she watched the interminable procession slowly file past, each individual doing homage to her brother's memory by reverently uncovering before his sons, she must have had many a deep and heart-swelling reflection. It is even probable that she may have been able to regard the stirring spectacle before her as only the practical fulfilment of the bright anticipation which had dawned upon her under the family roof tree at Mossgiel nearly sixty years previously.

"To the very last Mrs. Begg retained her clear and vigorous intelligence, and the late Dr. Robert Chambers, in compiling his edition of the poet's life and works in the years 1851 and 1852, made copious use of the interesting information she was capable of imparting in regard to the incidents and circumstances of her brother's earlier years. Not infrequently, too, he consulted her taste and judgment on points of difficulty as to the rendering and true meaning of doubtful or disputed passages in the poet's works, and he frequently transmitted to her the proof-sheets for perusal and approval, and more than once gave effect to alterations which she suggested."

Many interesting associations cluster round the little thatched cottage at Bell, near the Doon. Even after her death these associations were rather intensified than otherwise. Visitors from all parts of the world, with any or the slightest claim to an introduction, deemed it an honour to have a few words

with the nieces of Burns. It was the privilege of the writer to make their acquaintance in 1866, during a residence of several years in the neighbourhood, when he had frequent opportunities of forming a lasting friendship, which was afterwards continued by an occasional intercourse and correspondence until their death. The two sisters were endowed with remarkable memories, and could tell a story well. They conversed with great vivacity, and while they spoke thoroughly pure English to English visitors, their rich Ayrshire Doric—the language of Burns—seemed to come more naturally to their lips. Among the many distinguished persons who had visited them in their lowly cottage, they were always proud to speak of several Presidents of the United States who had so honoured them, Buchanan, Garfield, Grant, if we mistake not, being in the number. In 1872 Mr. H. M. Stanley, after his first return from Africa and his finding of Livingstone, waited upon the Misses Begg, and received from them a hearty welcome. The writer happened to be of the party, along with the late Sir Peter Coats, and remembers the great traveller afterwards expressing his satisfaction at his visit, hurried though it was. The two sisters were great favourites in the neighbourhood, the surrounding proprietors, as well as the people of Ayr, showing them every kindness. The Houldsworths, the Dicksons, the Cunninghams, the Blackburns, Sir Peter Coats, and James Baird of Cambusdoon, all evinced the warmest friendship. The latter was a particular favourite. Many a good joke they would tell of his peculiarities. Nothing seemed to delight him more than to get into their little parlour and to have a regular Scotch crack with them. Both Agnes and Isabella were strong in their attachment to "the Auld Kirk," and inclined to have pretty strong Tory notions, which a wise visitor did well not to call in question! It was not very safe to do so, if you wished to retain a high place in their good opinion. Their sympathies were thoroughly Scotch. We have a letter before us from Isabella, in which, after giving a description of an English gentleman who had been visiting her, she says, "He was so delighted with Scotland, and particularly its language, 'there



was,' he said, 'a pith in it which the English had not,' that he quite won my heart by his love for guid auld Scotland."

Another favourite was Mr. Stewart of Gearholm, nearly as good at the talking as they. It used to be remarked "that if Stewart and the Misses Begg were together in a room, no other body could possibly get in a word edgeways!" They never forgot old friends,

and would repeatedly tell of the kindness of this or that one. Dr. Robert Chalmers they held in the highest veneration for the interest he had always shown in them and their mother.

The death of Isabella Begg, in December 1886, severed the last link which united the descendants of William Burness with the district of the poet's nativity.

## XXVI.—A BURNS ANNIVERSARY ODE.

BY DUNCAN MACGREGOR CRERAR.

*Inscribed to Thomas Hunter, Esq., President of the Perth Burns Club, and Author of "Guide to Perthshire," etc., etc.*

LEAL-hearted Hunter, with delight I see  
The honour of thy Club conferred on thee.  
'Tis vested well. Warm greetings take from  
me.

How meet it is that Perthshire's peerless  
"Guide,"  
Should o'er the Perth Burns Festival preside!  
We sons of Perthshire who are far away  
From the sweet breezes of our beauteous Tay,  
Will join in spirit, speech, and roundelay.

And o'er the broad, the deep wave-crested  
ocean,  
Waft you God-speed with true, heart-felt  
devotion.

The Scot's heart thrills with gladness when  
returns

The natal day of our illustrious Burns;  
On Earth's broad surface, as on every sea,  
Is cherished his immortal memorie;  
And sterling tributes to his gift of song  
Shall aye adown the ages float along,  
And broadening, deepening, flowing like a  
river,

His name and brilliant fame shall live for  
ever.

Forget we not that in our classic shire  
He tuned mellifluously his living lyre,  
And world-known now is bonnie Ochertyre.  
The rugged Bruar, as it onward strays,  
A song of gratitude sings to his praise,  
That wood-clad now are all its banks and  
braes.

And Kenmore sweet, and our loved Taymouth  
grand,  
Were limned with splendour by his master  
hand.

In cadence with his song each birken trees  
Waves o'er the roaring Falls of steep Moness;  
The charming song did Aberfeldy bless,  
For what was then a straggling up and down,  
Is now a thriving and well-ordered town.  
Forget not, then, but cherish with regard,  
What Perthshire owes to Scotland's greatest  
Bard.

I, though an humble son of the fair shire,  
Would ask while eloquence is still afire,  
That on the score of your festivity  
The Perthshire Bards should aye remembered  
be.

They were, and are, a goodly, worthy throng,  
And soulsome are the notes of their sweet song.  
Give honour's place to her, the chaste, divine,  
Our noblest songstress, saintly Caroline.  
While human hearts can consolation feel,  
Shall live a hymn, her blest "Land o' the  
Leal."

Teach to your children dear her every page,  
And praise high Heaven for the rich heritage.

While just to all, ah! ne'er forget your own,  
List to their notes, melodious is their tone,  
Cast not at them the cold proverbial stone.  
They sing your loves, charmed scenes, themes  
new and hoary,  
Their burden ever Perthshire's fame and glory.



## XXVII.—LAMB AND BURNS.—A FEW BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

*By Dr. WILLIAM FINDLAY.*

CHARLES LAMB, in a passage of one of his delightful essays, "Imperfect Sympathies," portrays, in a vein of surpassing richness of humour, the characteristics of the Caledonian mind which, without the customary pinch of salt, are the reverse of flattering. He sets the Scottish intellect up for a target, and, in the most prodigal fashion, as if his quiver was inexhaustible, fires away like one possessed. It is splendid fun! You can see the twinkle of humour in his eye as shaft after shaft of wit glances from his bow. But if Lamb enjoys the sport, so does the reader—even the Caledonian reader. The truth is, we cannot choose but laugh with the good-natured satirist, the conceits he heaps upon us have such a comical sparkle, and are without a single drop of gall.

It is not so much that stale, old libel of his countrymen's he brings against us—that we are unable to understand a joke without a surgical operation—as that our minds are of such a highly-proper, fully clothed, correct, and perfect constitution, that nothing is ever required to be discounted from our speech, or taken for granted, hence we are totally unable to appreciate suggestiveness, rather than comprehensiveness, in the talk of others. We must be spoken to by the card or equivocation undoes all. A Scotchman's conversation, Lamb declares, "is as a book. His affirmations have the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. An impracticable wish is more than he can conceive. I was present not long since at a party of North Britons, where a son of Burns was expected, and happened to drop a silly expression (in my South British way) that I wished it were the father instead of the son—when four of them started up at once to inform me that 'that was impossible, because he was dead.'"

"Yet," he says, with charming mock-pathos, "I have been trying all my life to

like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me—and in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. In my early life I had a passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns. I have sometimes foolishly hoped to ingratiate myself with his countrymen by expressing it; but I have always found that a true Scot resents your admiration of his compatriot even more than he would your contempt of him. The latter he imputes to your 'imperfect acquaintance with many of the words which he uses;' and the same objection makes it a presumption in you to suppose that you can admire him."

Poor Lamb! I wonder if, in any of those London visits to Ampton Street, Gray's Inn Lane, he ever tried to ingratiate himself with that most colossal of nineteenth century Scotchmen, Thomas Carlyle, by means of the Scottish bard, whom Carlyle himself loved so well, and had written so eloquently about only two years before becoming a denizen of Ampton Street; and if he put his foot in it through some foolish non-Caledonian whimsicality or another? Lamb's "passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns, apart altogether from his gentle and patiently heroic self, should have begot in the breast of this terrible moral censor something else than contempt. It is a lasting rebuke to both their narrownesses that Lamb and Carlyle did not understand and appreciate each other. Carlyle ought to have cherished (not caricatured) this most precious and fragile morsel of English genius, and he would have done so had he had the gift to know him. And Lamb—poor, stuttering, weak, timid, punning Lamb! had he not missed it too, would have counted it a privilege to have a place of shelter in the bosom of this big, robust, Annandale, and tender-hearted withal, Scotch man of letters.

The probability is, however, that Lamb never expressed his "passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns" in Carlyle's presence; or if he did, the likelihood is that he fared no better at his hands than at those of the



other true Scots who resented his admiration of their compatriot as a piece of presumption on his part. One could fancy Carlyle, with his prejudiced notion of Lamb, that he was a purely Cockneyish product, with an insuperable proclivity to gin, and his wit a kind of diluted insanity rather than real humour, breaking into a fit of laughter at the bare idea of such a "windle-strae o' a creat're"—such "a sorry phenomenon," to use his own words—such an "emblem of imbecility, bodily and spiritual"—thinking himself capable of appreciating a great and natural genius like this "haggis-fed" Ayrshire ploughman.

It is nevertheless a fact which cannot be laughed out of court, not even by the capacious lungs of the wise Thomas, if they ever got the chance, that Lamb admired and loved the poetry of Burns; for it is unmistakably recorded in black and white in that wondrous correspondence of his; and very touching it is to see the warm and generous allusions of this shy London scholar and essayist to the Scottish Bard, divided as he was from him by a good many things besides distance, which was considerable in the end of the last century.

In a letter to his friend, Coleridge, who was living at Bristol, and just on the threshold of his literary career—(Lamb himself would only be about twenty-one years of age)—in a letter to Coleridge written sometime between the end of May and beginning of June, 1796, and about the time Burns would be staying at Brow in search of that health which he was never to find, Lamb says, in criticism of an extract from the "Religious Musings," "That is a capital line in your sixth number:

'This dark, frieze-coated, teeth-chattering month.'

They are exactly such epithets as Burns would have stumbled on, whose poem on the ploughed-up daisy you seem to have had in mind." And he is not so far astray in his notion.

A little later, December 10th, 1796, after Burns had been some five months in his grave, he is writing to his friend Coleridge again. Like the young peasant poet in the "Vision" he is in a despondent mood through home and other troubles; has sworn to have nothing more to do with poetry, and taken to the burning of manuscript. He had

written, indeed, only a few days before in a similar strain, "at length I have done with verse making," and Coleridge had remonstrated with him in the interval in the following, among other, lines:—

"But take thou heed;  
For thou art vulnerable, wild-eyed boy,  
And I have arrows mystically dipt,  
Such as may stop thy speed. Is thy Burns dead?  
And shall he die unwept, and sink to earth  
'Without the meed of one melodious tear?'  
Thy Burns, and Nature's own beloved bard,  
Who to the 'Illustrious of his native land  
So properly did look for patronage.'  
Ghost of Maecenas! hide thy blushing face!  
They snatched him from the sickle and the plough—  
To gauge ale-firkins."

"You sent me," Lamb says, continuing his letter of the 10th December, "some very sweet lines relative to Burns, but it was at a time when in my highly-agitated and perhaps somewhat distorted state of mind I thought it a duty to read 'em hastily and burn 'em. I burned all my verses." Further on in the same letter he says, referring doubtless to the short poem of which the above lines are a quotation, "Publish your Burns when and how you like, it will be new to me; my memory of it is very confused, and tainted with unpleasant associations. Burns was the god of my idolatry, as Bowles is of yours. I am jealous of your fraternising with Bowles, when I think you relish him more than Burns, or my old favourite, Cowper."

Reverting still further on in the same letter to his uncongenial London surroundings, without the society of his friend, Coleridge, "the remembrance of which," he says, "is a blessing partly, and partly a curse;" and which society, with its "damned foolish sensibility and melancholy," his relations at home blame for all poor Charles's madness—I say, reverting to his unhappy environment, he declares, "Not a soul loves Bowles here; scarce one has heard of Burns; but few laugh at me for reading my Testament. They talk a language I understand not."

It is likewise interesting to note some remarks of his friend and biographer, Barry Cornwall, bearing on this period of his life, in which he avers to Coleridge that "Burns is the god of my idolatry, as Bowles of yours." "Posterity," remarks Barry Cornwall, "has universally joined in the preference of Lamb.



Burns, indeed, was always one of his greatest favourites. He admired and sometimes quoted a line or two from the last stanza of the 'Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn,' 'The bridegroom may forget his bride,' etc.; and I have more than once heard him repeat, in a fond tender voice, when the subject of poets or poetry came under discussion, the following beautiful lines from the Epistle to Simpson of Ochiltree:—

'The Muse, nae poet ever fand her,  
Till by himsel' he learn'd to wander,  
Adown some trotting burn's meander  
An' no think lang.'

These he would press upon the attention of any one present (chanting them aloud), and would bring down the volume of Burns, and open it, in order that the page might be impressed on the hearer's memory. Sometimes—in a way scarcely discernible—he would kiss the volume; as he would also a book by Chapman or Sir Philip Sydney, or any other which he particularly valued."

In another letter to Coleridge, February 13th, 1797, after criticising some more of his friend's poetical workmanship, he relates how, on the afternoon of the day he was writing, he had been attending the funeral of his poor old aunt. This announcement leads him into a train of reflections on mortality. "Good God," he says, "who could have foreseen all this" (by all this he means his mother's murder by the hand of his sister in a fit of insanity, his querulous, paralytic father's death, and now his aunt's), "who could have foreseen all this but four months back? I reckoned, in particular, on my aunt's living many years; she was a very hearty old woman. But she was a mere skeleton when she died, looked more like a corpse that had lain weeks in the grave than one fresh dead. Coleridge, why are we to live on after all the strength and beauty of existence is gone, when all the life of life is fled, as poor Burns expresses it?"

Lamb, indeed, has shown himself to be no inconsiderable student of Burns. The poet's love for the lowest forms of created things has not escaped him. In a letter to Southey, March 20th, 1799, he tells him that his "Spider" has quite a Burnsonian flavour about it, and wonders that the Bard of Ayr-

shire never stumbled upon the subject in his lifetime. "I love this sort of poems," he says, "that open up a new intercourse with the most despised of the animal and insect race. I think this vein may be further opened. Peter Pindar hath very prettily apostrophised a fly; Burns has his mouse and his louse; Coleridge less successfully hath made overtures of intimacy to a jackass, therein, only following, at unressembling distance, Sterne and greater Cervantes;" and why, he considers, pursuing this humorous conceit, may not Elia become a partner with Southey in the animal-poem trade, and thereby contribute to the "breaking down of the partition between us and our poor earth-born companions? If old Quarles and Wither could live again we would invite them into our firm. Burns hath done his part."

In still another letter to Coleridge, August or September, 1800, after some gossip about his domestic arrangements, we come across this passage: "Have you seen the new edition of Burns—his posthumous works and letters? I have only been able to procure the first volume, which contains his life—very confusedly and badly written, and interspersed with dull pathological and medical discussions. It is written by a Dr. Currie. Do you know the well-meaning doctor? Alas! *ne sutor ultra crepidam.*"

Lamb, in his own humorous way, has hit off the character of Currie's life more effectively than a detailed and serious criticism would have done. There is doubtless a good big slice of truth in the witty Elia's remarks. But then, to be fair to "the well-meaning doctor," it must be remembered that he was not a professional man of letters. On the contrary, he was a physician and a scientist, resident in Liverpool, engrossed in the study of fevers and their treatment by cold affusion, and only yielded, out of his kindness of heart, after repeated solicitations from the poet's friends, to undertake the editing of his works, published ostensibly with the charitable object of providing for the widow and children. A professional man of letters, he states in his dedicatory preface, could not be found to undertake the editorship, though every endeavour was made to procure one. "The task,"



he says, "was beset with considerable difficulties, and men of established reputation naturally declined an undertaking, to the performance of which it was scarcely to be hoped that general approbation could be obtained, by any exertion of judgment or temper." Moreover, the subject itself was new and perplexing. Burns was a phenomenon which dazzled, bewildered, and puzzled. The world had not had sufficient leisure yet to see all round about him, and perhaps the "dull pathological" method was the only one open to Currie. By the time Carlyle came to write his essay on the genius and character of the poet the subject was a little better understood and its dimensions more able to be gauged.

April 26th, 1816, sixteen years after he wrote the foregoing condemnatory paragraph, we find Lamb in a letter to Wordsworth once more expressing himself on the same subject. It appears that a friend of Burns, presumably the Rev. James Gray, master of the Grammar School, Dumfries, on account of an intended republication of the Currie edition by the poet's brother, Gilbert, consulted Wordsworth as to the best mode of vindicating the reputation of the poet, which, it was alleged, had been much injured by the publication of Dr. Currie's *Life and Correspondence of Burns*. Wordsworth seems to have given Lamb a sight of his letter to his friend, for Lamb writes to Wordsworth, "the letter I read with unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted—called for. The parallel of Cotton

with Burns I heartily approve. Izaak Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears."

Though this is the last written word to be found in the correspondence of Lamb relative to Burns, it shows that the passion of his early youth, toned down a little, perhaps, with age, was the same. There is something quite touching in the circumstance of Lamb and Wordsworth, in these now far off days, standing up in defence of the character of Burns—two men, not only so different from each other in many aspects of their characterization, but also so different from the Scottish Bard himself—all nerves, and fire, and feeling. And there is also something consolatory for the hearts of Burns admirers in the reflection that during the years when their beloved poet was on his trial, so to speak, this school of English lake poets and literati, of which Lamb was as good as one, clearly and enthusiastically recognised from the first the marvellous genius of the young Scottish ploughman, who had gone down into his untimely grave amid so much pious headshaking and uncharitable whispering from the "unco guid." Nor did they ever afterwards waver in their loyalty to their great inspirer and reformer, to whom, perhaps, they owed more than to any other literary influence, not even excepting Cowper's, their own emancipation from the thralldom of Pope and his highly-polished and technically-correct artificialities, back again to a realism and nature.

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### XXVIII.—BURNS' BIRTHDAY.

*From "A Sheaf of Song," by Dr. BENJAMIN F. LEGGETT.*

O ROYAL-HEARTED Robert Burns!  
So tender, true, and strong!  
We crown again his natal day  
With loving wreath of song.

In every land, or near or far,  
His gentle name is known;  
His songs, far sweeping round the world,  
On wings of fame have flown.

Through all the dim-aisled century  
His living numbers swell,  
For well the poet wrought his charm  
And wove his magic spell.

To-day his words are sweeter still  
On music's trembling tongue,  
And all the world is greener far  
Since he has lived and sung.

While on his hills the gray light dawns—  
The songful day returns,  
We tread again the bonnie land  
So loved by Robert Burns!

What charm lies on her purple heights,  
And on her meadows fair,  
As in a dream we wander forth,  
A sweet June day at Ayr.



The flowing waters through the town  
 The gray old arches lave,  
 And Wallace's tower stands stark and still  
 To hear the Twa Brigs rave.

There stands O'Shanter's cozy inn,  
 A refuge from the storm,  
 Where Tam so gloriously forgot  
 The wrath at home so warm?

'Mid meadow-lands of clover bloom  
 And clumps of snowy thorn,  
 Beneath the lowly thatch we stand  
 Where Bobby Burns was born!

Glad bird-songs with the sunshine come  
 To cheer the dusky gloom,  
 As though the old sweet lullaby  
 Yet lingered in the room.

Beyond is Auld Kirk Alloway,  
 All roofless save the sky,  
 Where witch-fires lighted up the dark  
 As Tam rode reeling by.

Ah, how the warlock revel rang,  
 And how the windows glowed,  
 As Tam by all the clan pursued  
 Went thundering down the road!

O, what a goblin ride was that,  
 It made the stoutest quail;  
 In sooth it saved the man his life,  
 But cost gray Meg her tail!

The Auld Brig clasps the bank of Doon—  
 The river glides away,  
 The hoof-beats of that hurried flight  
 Will ring and sound for aye.

The bonnie braes of Doon are glad  
 Through winding curves and turns,  
 And birds repeat by burn and mere  
 The name of Robert Burns!

No daisies bloom beside the way,  
 Nor star with pearl and gold,  
 The broad green belt of meadow lands  
 But still his memory hold.

His birthday 'mid the Scottish hills  
 Is glad with love and song,  
 For dear they hold his precious name,  
 And burning hate of wrong:

For high above the shams of rank,  
 Or accident of birth,  
 He set the royalty of man  
 And loved him for his worth.

So comes the poet's natal day  
 With joy and gladness in;  
 For him the pure sweet charity,  
 Which covers every sin.

Be just; speak not of wasted years,  
 But let his virtues shine;  
 Above his weak humanity  
 Was faith in the Divine!

## XXIX.—HEARTINESS OF BURNS AND SCOTCH SONG WRITERS.

BY THEODORE WATTS.

HEARTINESS and melody—the two requisites of a song which can never be dispensed with—can rarely be compassed, as it seems, by one and the same individual. In both these qualities the Elizabethan poets stand pre-eminent, though even with them the melody is not so singable as it might be made. Since their time heartiness has, perhaps, been a Scottish rather than an English endowment of the song-writer. It is difficult to imagine an Englishman writing a song like "Tullochgorum" or a song like "Maggie Lauder," where all the heartiness and impulse of the poet's mood conquer all impediments of close vowels and rugged consonantal combinations. Of Scottish song-writers Burns is, of course,

the head; for the songs of John Skinner, the heartiest song-writer that has appeared in Great Britain (not excluding Herrick), are too few in number to entitle him to be placed beside a poet so prolific in heartiness and melody as Burns. With regard to Campbell's heartiness, this is quite a different quality from the heartiness of Burns and Skinner, and is in quality English rather than Scottish, though no doubt, it is of a fine and rare strain, especially in the "Battle of the Baltic." His songs illustrate an infirmity which even the Scottish song-writers share with the English—a defective sense of that true song-warble which we get in the stornelli and rispetti of the Italian peasants.



XXX.—HENRY MACKENZIE AND THE FIRST REVIEW OF BURNS'S POEMS.

BY JOHN D. ROSS.

HENRY MACKENZIE, author of "The Man of feeling," "The Man of the World," "Julia de Roubigné," etc., was born at Edinburgh in August, 1745. He was the son of a well known physician and received a careful and classical education. He afterwards studied law, and in 1775 went to London to study the modes of English exchequer practice. Shortly after his return to his native city he was appointed attorney for the crown in the Exchequer Court.

In 1777 he became connected with a social society which numbered among its members many of the prominent literary lights of the Scottish capital at the time. At these meetings essays were read, and these were afterwards published in a weekly paper called the *Mirror*, and later on in a similar paper called the *Lounger*. In the latter publication, on the ninth of December, 1786, Mackenzie published the first critique which had appeared on the poems of Burns—a critique which awarded the poet a great deal of praise, and served to introduce his poems to the fashionable and higher ranks of society throughout Scotland and England.

It had a somewhat lengthy title, viz.—"Surprising effects of Original Genius, exemplified in the Poetical Productions of Robert Burns, an Ayrshire Ploughman," and was as follows:—"To the feeling and susceptible there is something wonderfully pleasing in the contemplation of genius, of that supereminent reach of mind by which some men are distinguished. In the view of highly superior talents, as in that of great and stupendous natural objects, there is a sublimity which fills the soul with wonder and delight, which expands it, as it were, beyond its usual bounds, and which, investing our nature with extraordinary honours, interests our curiosity and flatters our pride.

This divinity of genius, however, which admiration is fond to worship, is best arrayed in the darkness of distant and remote periods, and is not easily acknowledged in the present times, or in places with which we are perfectly

acquainted. Exclusive of all the deductions which envy or jealousy may sometimes be supposed to make, there is a familiarity in the near approach of persons around us, not very consistent with the lofty ideas which we wish to form of him who has led captive our imagination in the triumph of his fancy, overpowered our feelings with the tide of passion, or enlightened our reason with the investigation of hidden truths. It may be that, "in the olden time," genius had some advantages which tended to its vigour and its growth; but it is not unlikely that, even in these degenerate days, it rises much oftener than it is observed; that in "the ignorant present time" our posterity may find names which they will dignify, though we neglected, and pay to their memory those honours which their contemporaries have denied them.

There is, however, a natural, and, indeed, a fortunate vanity in trying to redress this wrong which genius is exposed to suffer. In the discovery of talents generally unknown, men are apt to indulge the same fond partiality as in all other discoveries which themselves have made; hence we have had repeated instances of painters and of poets, who have been drawn from obscure situations, and held forth to public notice and applause by the extravagant encomiums of their introducers, yet in a short time have sunk again to their former obscurity; whose merit, though perhaps somewhat neglected, did not appear much under-valued by the world, and could not support, by its own intrinsic excellence, the superior place which the enthusiasm of its patrons would have assigned it. I know not if I shall be accused of such enthusiasm and partiality when I introduce to the notice of my readers a poet of our own country, with whose writings I have lately become acquainted; but, if I am not greatly deceived, I think I may safely pronounce him a genius of no ordinary rank. The person to whom I allude is Robert Burns, an Ayrshire ploughman, whose poems were some time ago published in a country town in the west of



Scotland, with no other ambition, it would seem, than to circulate among the inhabitants of the country where he was born, to obtain a little fame from those who have heard of his talents. I hope I shall not be thought to assume too much if I endeavour to place him in a higher point of view, to call for a verdict of his country on the merit of his works, and to claim for him those honours which their excellence appear to deserve.

In mentioning the circumstances of his humble station, I mean not to rest his pretensions solely on that title or to urge the merits of his poetry when considered in relation to the lowness of his birth, and the little opportunity of improvement which his education could afford. These particulars, indeed, might excite our wonder at his productions; but his poetry, considered abstractedly, and without the apologies arising from his situation, seems to me fully entitled to command our feelings and to obtain our applause.

One bar, indeed, his birth and education have opposed to his fame—the language in which most of his poems are written. Even in Scotland the provincial dialect which Ramsay and he have used is now read with a difficulty which greatly damps the pleasure of the reader; in England it cannot be read at all, without such a constant reference to a glossary as nearly to destroy the pleasure.

Some of his productions, however, especially those of the grave style, are almost English. From one of these I shall first present my readers with an extract, in which, I think, they will discover a high tone of feeling, a power and energy of expression, particularly and strongly characteristic of the mind and the voice of a poet. 'Tis from his poem entitled "The Vision," in which the genius of his native county, Ayrshire, is thus supposed to address him:

With future hope, I oft would gaze,  
Fond on thy little early ways.  
Thy rudely caroll'd chiming phrase,  
In uncouth rhymes,  
Fired at the simple artless lays  
Of other times.

I saw thee seek the sounding shore,  
Delighted with the dashing roar;  
Or when the north his fleecy store  
Drove thro' the sky,  
I saw, grim nature's visage hoar  
Struck thy young eye.

Or when the deep-green mantled earth  
Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,  
And joy and music pouring forth  
In ev'ry grove,  
I saw thee eye the general mirth  
With boundless love.

When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,  
Called forth the reaper's rustling noise,  
I saw thee leave their evening joys,  
And lonely stalk,  
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise,  
In pensive walk.

When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,  
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,  
Those accents, graceful to thy tongue,  
Th' adorned name,  
I taught thee how to pour in song,  
To sooth thy flame.

I saw thy pulse's maddening play,  
Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,  
Misled by fancy's meteor ray,  
By passion driven;  
But yet the light that led astray  
Was light from heaven.

Of strains like the above, solemn and sublime, with that rapt and inspired melancholy in which the poet lifts his eye "above this visible diurnal sphere," the poems entitled "Despondency," "The Lament," "Winter, a Dirge," and the "Invocation to Ruin," afford no less striking examples. Of the tender and the moral, specimens equally advantageous might be drawn from the elegiac verses entitled "Man was made to mourn," from "The Cottar's Saturday Night," the stanzas "To a Mouse," or those "To a Mountain Daisy," on turning it down with the plough in April, 1786. This last poem I shall insert entire, not from its superior merit, but because its length suits the bounds of my paper:

Wee, modest, crimson-tipp'd flow'r,  
Thou's met me in an evil hour,  
For I maun crush amang the stoure  
Thy slender stem;  
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,  
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,  
The bonnie lark, companion meet!  
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!  
Wi' spreckl'd breast,  
When upward-springing, blithe, to greet  
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north  
Upon thy early, humble birth;  
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth  
Amid the storm,  
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth  
Thy tender form.



The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,  
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield :  
But though beneath the random bield  
O' clod or stane,  
Adorn the histie stibble-field,  
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,  
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,  
Thou lifts thy unassuming head  
In humble guise ;  
But now the share uptears thy bed,  
And low thou lies !

Such is the fate of artless maid,  
Sweet floweret of the rural shade !  
By love's simplicity betray'd,  
And guileless trust,  
Till she, like thee, all soil'd is laid  
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,  
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd !  
Unskilled he to note the card  
Of prudent lore.  
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,  
And overwhelm him o'er !

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,  
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,  
By human pride or cunning driv'n  
To mis'ry's brink,  
Till wrenched of every stay but heaven,  
He, ruin'd, sink !

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the daisy's fate,  
That fate is thine—no distant date ;  
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives, elate  
Full on thy bloom.  
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight,  
Shall be thy doom !

I have seldom met with an image more truly pastoral than that of the lark in the second stanza. Such strokes as these mark the pencil of the poet, which delineates nature with the precision of intimacy, yet with the delicate colouring of beauty and of taste. The power of genius is not less admirable in tracing the manners than in painting the scenery of nature. That intuitive glance with which a writer like Shakespeare discerns the characters of men, with which he catches the many changing lines of life, forms a sort of problem in the science of mind, of which it is easier to see the truth than to assign the cause.

Though I am far from meaning to compare our rustic bard to Shakspeare, yet whoever will read his lighter and more humorous poems, his "Dialogue of the Dogs," his

"Dedication to G—— H——, Esq," his "Epistle to a Young Friend," and "To W. S——n," will perceive with what uncommon penetration and sagacity this heaven-taught ploughman, from his humble and unlettered station, has looked upon men and manners.

Against some passages of these last mentioned poems it has been objected that they breathe a spirit of libertinism and irreligion. But, if we consider the ignorance and fanaticism of the lower class of the people in the country where these poems were written, a fanaticism of that pernicious sort which sets faith in opposition to good works, the fallacy and danger of which a mind so enlightened as our poet's could not but perceive, we shall not look upon his lighter muse as the enemy of religion (of which in several places he expresses the justest sentiments) though she has been somewhat unguarded in her ridicule of hypocrisy.

In this, as in other respects, it must be allowed that there are exceptional parts of the volume he has given to the public, which caution would have suppressed, or correction struck out ; but poets are seldom cautious, and our poet had, alas ! no friends or companions from whom correction could be obtained. When we reflect on his rank in life, the habits to which he must have been subject, and the society in which he must have mixed, we regret perhaps more than wonder that delicacy should be so often offended in perusing a volume in which there is so much to interest and please us.

Burns possesses the spirit as well as the fancy of a poet. That honest pride and independence of soul which are sometimes the muse's only dower, break forth on every occasion in his works. It may be, then, I shall wrong his feelings while I indulge my own, in calling the attention of the public to his situation and circumstances. That condition, humble as it was, in which he found content, and wooed the muse, might not be deemed uncomfortable ; but grief and misfortunes have reached him there ; and one or two of his poems hint, what I have learned from some of his countrymen, that he has been obliged to form the resolution of leaving his native land, to seek, under a West Indian clime, that shelter and support which Scotland



has denied him. But I trust means may be found to prevent this resolution from taking place; and to do my country no more than justice when I suppose her ready to stretch out her hand to cherish and retain this native poet, whose "wood-notes wild," possess so much excellence. To repair the wrongs of suffering or neglected merit, to call forth genius from the obscurity in which it had pined indignant, and place it where it may profit or delight the world; these are exertions which give to wealth an enviable superiority, to greatness and to patronage a laudable pride."

Up to the time when the above review appeared Mackenzie and the poet had not met, but they soon became friends and continued such till the death of Burns, in 1796. The poet entertained a very high opinion of his reviewer and referred to him and his works on several occasions. Writing to Mrs. Dunlop on the tenth of April, 1790, he says, "Mackenzie has been called the Addison of the Scots, and in my opinion, Addison would not be hurt at the comparison. If he has not Addison's exquisite humour he as certainly outdoes him in the tender and the pathetic. His 'Man of Feeling' (but I am not counsel learned in the law of criticism), I estimate as the first performance in its kind I ever saw. From what book, moral or even pious, will the susceptible young mind receive impressions more congenial to humanity and kindness, generosity and benevolence; in short, more of all that ennobles the soul to herself or endears her to others—than from the simple affecting tale of poor Harley." Sir Walter Scott also had a high regard for Mackenzie and his writings and to him he dedicated the first of his great romances *Waverley*. "The time, we hope is yet distant," writes Sir Walter, "when, speaking of this author as of those with whom his genius ranks him, a biographer may with delicacy trace his personal character and peculiarities, or record the manner in which he has discharged the duties of a citizen."

"When that hour shall arrive we trust few of his contemporaries will be left to mourn him; but we can anticipate the sorrow of a later generation, when deprived of the wit

which enlivened their hours of enjoyment, the benevolence which directed and encouraged their studies, and the wisdom which instructed them in their duties to society. It is enough to say here that Mr. Mackenzie survives, venerable and venerated, as the last link of the chain which connects the Scottish literature of the present age with the period when there were giants in the land—the days of Robertson and Hume, and Smith, and Home, and Clark, and Ferguson; and that the remembrance of an era so interesting could not have been intrusted to a sounder judgment, a more correct taste, or a more tenacious memory.

"But it is as a novelist that we are now called on to consider our author's powers, and the universal and permanent popularity of his writings entitles us to rank him amongst the most distinguished of his class. His works possess the rare and invaluable property of originality, to which all other qualities are as dust in the balance; and the sources to which he resorts to excite our interest are rendered accessible by a path peculiarly his own." Besides "The Man of Feeling" and the other works already referred to, Mackenzie published a volume of translations and dramatic pieces in 1791, a life of Dr. Blacklock in 1793, and a life of John Horne, author of "Douglas," in 1812. A complete edition of his works in eight large octavo volumes was published in 1808. He died in January, 1831, at the advanced age of eighty-six.

Speaking of Mackenzie, the author of "Peter's letters," published in 1820, says "I have never seen a finer specimen, both in appearance and manners of the gentleman of the last age. In his youth he must have been a perfect model of manly beauty; and, indeed, no painter could select a more exquisite subject for his art even now. His hair combed back from his forehead, and highly powdered; his long queue, his lace ruffles, his suit of snuff-coloured cloth, cut in the old liberal way, with long flaps to his waistcoat, his high-heeled shoes, and rich stout buckles—everything was in perfect unison in all the fashion of his age."



## XXXI.—THE LATE MR. GEORGE GEBBIE.

MR. GEORGE GEBBIE, an enthusiastic Burns scholar and the editor and publisher of the finest edition of Burns's works ever issued in America, died at his home in Philadelphia, Pa., August 13, 1892. He was born at Rosemount, near Troon, on August 24, 1832, and belonged to a very old family of Scotch yeomanry, who farmed an estate called Newbyres, and which has existed for over 900 years. He attended the village school at Troon, kept by a dominie of the old school, and was considered a very bright boy, and even then showed a decided interest and predilection for literature and art.

At the age of 17 he went to London and became a dry goods clerk. In 1862 he came to America to visit his brother, Thomas Gebbie, a prominent merchant in the town of Howick, province of Quebec, Canada. In 1864 he engaged in the book business as a canvasser for Jonson, Fry & Co., of New York, and remained with them until 1866, when he started in business for himself as a retail bookseller in Philadelphia.

In 1867 he formed a partnership with

Frederic Keppel, but owing to Mr. Keppel's preference for engravings to books they separated amicably the same year.

In 1873 he associated with himself Mr. George Barrie, forming the firm of Gebbie & Barrie.

Shortly afterwards they sold out their retail book business to Robert M. Lindsay, and entered the subscription publishing business, but in 1880 Mr. Gebbie retired, selling his interest to Mr. Barrie. He then went to Europe, where he intended to remain, but his affection for his adopted country (he having become a naturalized citizen in 1869) proved so strong that in 1881 he returned and entered again into the publishing business, using the firm name of Gebbie & Co., although he was the sole member of the firm until 1891, when he admitted his eldest daughter, Mary Elizabeth, to an interest in his business.

He was married April 20, 1868, to Miss Mary Fitzgerald, a Philadelphian by birth, but at the time of her marriage a resident of Baltimore. His widow and five children, four daughters and one son, survive him.

## XXXII.—JOHN LAPRAIK, THE BARD OF MUIRKIRK.

BY THE LATE JAMES PATERSON.

FROM THE "KILMARNOCK STANDARD."

THE name of Lapraik is familiar to every reader of Burns; yet comparatively few know anything of his writings, his history, or his family. The surname—now very rare in this country—is perhaps of French origin. The family of Lekprevick or Lapraik of that ilk made a considerable figure before the reign of Robert the Bruce, and continued to flourish a long time after." The Castle of Lekprevick, now in ruins, is about a mile and a half south from Kilbride, in the country of Lanark, Robert Lekprevick was printer to James the Sixth of Scotland. He it was who first gave to the world a collected edition of the Scottish Statutes. Another production of his press is "The Actis and Deides of the illuster and vailyeand campion Schir William Wallace, of Ellerslie, imprintit at Edinburgh by Robert

Lekprevick, at the expensis of Henri Charteris; and are to be sauld in his buith, on the north side of the gait above the throne. Black letter, 4to. Anno Do. MDLXX." The only copy known to exist of this very rare edition of a popular work is in the British Museum. "The Sege of the Castle of Edinburgh" was also "imprintit be Robert Lekprevick, anno 1573." Whether or not the subject of this sketch was a descendant of the printer does not appear; nor is it known whether he was in any way connected with the ancient stock, although the scarcity now-a-days of persons of the same name makes such a presumption extremely probable.

John Lapraik, the senior of all the Ayrshire contemporaries of Burns, was born in 1727 at Laigh Dalquhram (or, as now pronounced,



Dalfram), situated on the road to Sorn, about three miles west of Muirkirk. Here his father lived before him, and the property had been in possession of the family for several generations. He was the eldest son, and by the death of his father, succeeded at an early period to the paternal inheritance. His education, though equal, if not superior, to the common range of parochial instruction at that period, was by no means classical; and as observed by himself, he had little leisure to improve his mind by extensive reading. At what period he first attempted verse it is impossible to guess, but it must have been long prior to the attempts of his youthful friend, the inimitable bard of Coila.

Lapraik married in March, 1754. He had then attained his twenty-seventh year. The object of his choice was Margaret Rankin, eldest daughter of William Rankin of Lochhead, and sister to John, the well-known "rough, rude, ready-witted Rankin." From a document (the contract of marriage) in our possession it appears that he received with his bride a dowry of one hundred pounds sterling, and that, in case of his demise, under certain contingencies she was to obtain an annuity of two hundred merks Scots. His property at this period consisted, in the words of the document, of "All and haill that eight shilling ninepenny land of old extent of Dalquhram, *alias* Nether Dalquhram; and all and haill the eight shilling ninepenny land of old extent of Upper Dalquhram, commonly called Laigh Hall; as also all and haill the eight shilling ninepenny land of old extent of Dalquhram, called Douglass Dalquhram, with the respective houses, biggings, yeards, parts, and pendicles, and haill pertinents of the said several lands and teinds, parsonage and vinerage of the same, all lying within the parish of Muirkirk, lordship and late regality, now barony of Kylesmuir, and sherifffdom of Ayr, together with the fishing of salmon and other fishing in the water of Ayr." Besides the lands enumerated, which appear to have been considerable, Lapraik held in lease the ground and mill of Muirsmill, distant from Dalfram about half-a-mile; and for some years subsequent to his marriage he enjoyed with his "wedded wife" that degree of happiness which competence and affection were so well

calculated to afford. Possessed of a cheerful, kind disposition, few men were more beloved in his sphere or better fitted for the reciprocal interchange of social life. Fond of poetry and song, he essayed the rustic lyre; and happy in his household, its strings were alone attuned for the domestic hearth. Little did he dream that the muse thus wooed in prosperity should, at no distant period, become the solace of his misfortune!

Among the earliest of the poet's griefs was the death of his wife, soon after the birth of her fifth child. This was indeed a severe stroke, and not less keenly felt. The blank in the domestic circle was supplied, however, a few years afterwards (1766) in the person of Janet Anderson of Lightshaw, the name of a neighbouring farm possessed by her father. Janet was fourteen years his junior, and a young woman in every respect capable of inspiring the poet with the most ardent affection.

"Ye gods! who reside in the regions above,  
Deprive me of life, or inspire *her* with love!  
Make Jenny's fond bosom to feel for my pain,  
That I may sweet peace and contentment regain."

The gods were propitious—

"She smiled sweetly on me, and gave me her hand,  
And with blushes did own she was at my command:  
Transported with joy, while she lean'd on my breast,  
I thanked the kind gods who had heard my request:  
So I to all sorrows and cares bid farewell—  
While Jenny does love me no care I can feel."

When Lapraik thus expressed himself he was secure in his property of Dalfram, and, though not a wealthy laird, could scarcely have imagined that the day of adversity was so near at hand.

In November, 1769, about four years after the consummation of his second marriage, the Ayr bank was established, under the designation of Douglas, Heron & Co., with a capital of £150,000, and numbering among its shareholders some of the most wealthy and influential men in the country, the concern began business under the happiest auspices and with the fairest prospects of success. Its career, however, was short and its effects ruinous. In the History of Banking scarcely an instance is to be found of greater mismanagement. In little more than two years the company was under the necessity of suspending payments (June, 1772), and though



a farther advance was at that time obtained from the proprietors, the bank finally closed its transactions on the 12th of August, 1773, having thus scarcely completed three full years from the date of its commencement. Many families of Ayrshire were buried in the fall of Douglas, Heron & Co., and among these, unhappily, was the laird of Dalfram. "In an evil hour," says Cunningham, "when the love of making 'meikle mair' came upon him, he *purchased shares* in what Burns called 'that villanous bubble the Ayr Bank,' and was involved in its ruin." Though true in the main particular, this is not altogether a correct statement. Lapraik, we believe, never was a shareholder; but what was equally ruinous, he became a victim to the mania for speculation created by the lavish credits of the bank. He not only obtained discounts himself, but guaranteed others to a heavy amount, and when the "bubble burst" he found himself involved beyond the possibility of extrication. A poem written apparently at this juncture or shortly afterwards, embodies the author's sentiments, somewhat quaintly expressed, relative to the Douglas and Heron Bank and the wide-spread ruin occasioned by its fall:—

"In the year sixty-nine and seventy  
Notes amongst us were too plenty;  
We took our glass and were right canty,  
And little thought  
That plenty, when 'tis misimproven,  
Brings men to nought.

The cry went through from 'pole to pole,'  
There's credit here for every soul;  
If he's well back'd, without control,  
He shall have money:  
'Tis bitter sauce to each one now  
That then was honey.

This credit went o'er all the country;  
It was as ready as *King's bounty*;  
But now there is not one of twenty  
That can get rest;  
*Hornings* are going every day—  
They're so opprest.

If I might pick some men by name  
Wha did contrive a dacent *scheme*,  
They're foolish fock wha these men blame,  
For their intention  
Was to make ev'ry *crown* a *pound*  
By this invention.

In midst of their industrious plan  
Their money is required again.

He now is sad wha then was fain;  
The secret's kent;  
His profits he has not got in,  
And money's spent.

And then ilk creditor he has  
Comes runnin' on him wi' a blaze,  
Each telling that he must have his  
Or caution get;  
Then diligence against him goes,  
Syne he's laid flat!"

The mismanagement on the part of the company chiefly existed in the lavish manner in which their notes were thrown into circulation and the granting of loans on long credits, whereby the capital was withdrawn from the immediate use of the bank. This evil, proceeding partly from ignorance, was augmented by the circumstance of a number of adventurers having found their way into the directorship, who, at once needy and imprudent, set at defiance all the regulations of the establishment. The result was the speedy dissipation of the company's funds—the contraction of an equivalent debt especially in London, to meet the return of their notes—and a commercial panic occurring at the time, the money market suddenly became depressed, and all who were struggling for existence were speedily overwhelmed. At this crisis the desperate efforts made by the sale of redeemable annuities plunged the company into still further difficulties, and the attempt to save the concern from *legal* bankruptcy ended a few months afterwards in a *voluntary* one, the evils of which were considerably augmented by the very means adopted to avoid such an alternative. It now became a matter of necessity on the part of the company to realise every available debt; hence the *hornings* and *diligence* alluded to by Lapraik.

In consequence of approaching difficulties the poet let his own lands of Dalfram and retired to Muirsmill, where he remained for a few years. From thence he removed to Netherwood, a farm on the water of Greenoak, still retaining the lease of the mill, however, and here he continued for nine years, struggling in vain to overcome the losses he had sustained. At the end of that period he sold off his property and again returned to Muirsmill, but the sale of his lands having failed to rid him of his liabilities, he still found



himself the victim of legal prosecution, and at length, to heap the full measure of wretchedness on the devoted head of an unfortunate but honest man, he was thrown into prison. In his preface to his book of poems Lapraik alludes to this event in the following words:—"In consequence of misfortunes and disappointments he (the author) was, some years ago, torn from his ordinary way of life and shut up in retirement, which he found at first painful and disagreeable. Imagining, however, that he had a kind of turn for rhyming, in order to support his solitude he set himself to compose the following pieces," etc. While immured within the walls of Ayr jail he is said to have written the very feeling lyric, "When I upon thy bosom lean," addressed to his wife:—

"When I upon thy bosom lean  
Enraptured I do call thee mine;  
I glory in those sacred ties  
That made us one who once were twain.  
A mutual flame inspires us both—  
The tender look, the melting kiss;  
Even years shall ne'er destroy our love,  
Some sweet sensation new will rise.

Have I a wish? 'tis all for thee;  
I know thy wish is me to please;  
Our moments pass so smooth away  
That numbers on us look and gaze.  
Well pleased to see our happy days,  
They bid us live and still love on;  
And if some cares shall chance to rise,  
Thy bosom still shall be my home.

I'll lull me there and take my rest;  
And if that aught disturb my fair,  
I'll bid her laugh her cares all out,  
And beg her not to drop a tear.  
Have I a joy? 'tis all her own;  
Her heart and mine are all the same;  
They're like the woodbine round the tree,  
That's twined till death shall us disjoin."

This song appeared in Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, with more of a Scottish dress and considerably improved, we should suppose, by the hand of Burns. The above is copied verbatim from Lapraik's volume. The other version is as follows:—

"When I upon thy bosom lean,  
And fondly clasp thee a' my ain,  
I glory in the sacred ties  
That made us ane wha ance were twain.  
A mutual flame inspires us baith—  
The tender look, the melting kiss;  
Even years shall ne'er destroy our love,  
But only gie us change o' bliss.

Hae I a wish? it's a' for thee;  
I ken thy wish is me to please;  
Our moments pass sae smooth away  
That numbers on us look and gaze.  
Weel pleas'd they see our happy days,  
Nor Envy's sel' finds aught to blame;  
And aye when weary cares arise,  
Thy bosom still shall be my hame.

I'll lay me there and tak' my rest;  
And if that aught disturb my dear,  
I'll bid her laugh her cares away,  
And beg her not to drap a tear.  
Hae I a joy? it's a' her ain;  
United still her heart and mine;  
They're like the woodbine round the tree,  
That's twined till death shall them disjoin."

It was this song, first heard at a country *rockin'*, that induced Burns to open a correspondence with the author, which he did in his "Epistle to J. Lapraik, an Old Scottish Bard," dated 1st April, 1785:—

"On fasten-een we had a rockin'  
To ca' the crack and weave our stockin'  
An' there was muckle fun an' jokin'  
Ye needna doubt;  
At length we had a hearty yokin'  
At sang about.

There was ae sang amang the rest,  
Aboon them a' it pleased me best,  
That some kind husband had address  
To some sweet wife;  
It thrill'd the heart-strings through the breast,  
A' to the life."

The epistles of Burns to Lapraik are well known. His advances, as an "unknown frien," were met upon the part of the Bard of Muirkirk by that openness and warmth of feeling which were the characteristics of the unfortunate but still facetious miller of Muirsmill. "The reply of Lapraik," says Allan Cunningham, "has been recorded; it was in its nature pleasing, and drew from the Bard of Mossgiel a second epistle, in which he says much of his toils and his musings." Cunningham has not stated *where* the reply is recorded. Assuredly not in Lapraik's volume; nor in any of the editions of the works of Burns. That the correspondence, however, was carried on for some time is evident. One of Lapraik's sons, James, recollected having been the bearer of several communications betwixt his father and Burns, who was then at Mossgiel. On the first occasion, he found the bard in a field engaged in sowing corn. "I'm no sure if I ken the han'," said Burns, as he



took possession of the letter; but no sooner had he glanced at its contents, than unconsciously letting go the sheet containing the grain, it was not till he had finished reading that he discovered the loss he had sustained.

There are three epistles by Burns to Lapraik preserved. Two were published in his first and second editions, and the third appeared for the first time in Cromek's *Reliques of Burns*, from the poet's book of MSS. It is to be regretted that the epistles of Lapraik are not preserved. Though probably possessed of no intrinsic merit, they would have served to illustrate those of Burns, and have gratified that curiosity which the want of them cannot fail to create. Burns in his first epistle proposed a meeting at Mauchline—

“But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,  
I should be proud to meet you there;  
We'se gie ae nicht's discharge to care  
If we foregather,  
An' hae a swap o' rhymin'-ware  
Wi' ane anither.”

The poets met as proposed; and, though we have no record of the night's proceedings, imagination will be at no loss to fill up the blank. That it had been agreeable, and such as to excite the desire of greater intimacy, may be inferred from the third letter of Burns (September 13, 1785), in which he promises that—

“If the beast and branks be spared  
Till kye be gaun without the herd,  
An' a' the vittel in the yard,  
An theekit richt,  
I mean your ingle-side to guard  
Ae Winter nicht.

“Then muse-inspirin' aquavitæ,  
Shall mak' us baith sae blyth and witty,  
Till ye forget ye're auld and gitty,  
An' be as canty  
As ye were nine years less than thretty,  
Sweet ane-and-twenty.”

The poet, in this instance, was as good as his word. In the course of the winter he visited Lapraik at Muirsmill, where he dined, spent a merry evening, and next morning took his departure for Mossgiel.

The flattering attention paid him by Burns, and the reception which the works of that poet met from the public, had the effect of stimulating Lapraik, who, though now far advanced in years, resolved upon venturing before the world as an author. With this

view he set about wooing the muse with all the freshness of a green old age; and in 1788 appeared, from the Kilmarnock press, the works of the Poet of Muirkirk, entitled “Poems, on several occasions, by John Lapraik,” 8vo, pp. 240. With the exception of the song already quoted, few of the pieces display any approach to poetic merit; still the volume is not without interest, and is now so very rare, that a few extracts, we doubt not, will prove acceptable to our readers. It is rather surprising that the volume contains none of the author's epistles to Burns, the very pieces, of all others, that would have most enchanced his work in the eyes of posterity. There is, to be sure, one epistle to the poet, but of a more recent date than their first correspondence, and is chiefly an apology for his attempting to court the muse in his old age—

“I liked the lasses unco weel,  
Langsyne when I was young,  
Which sometimes kittled up my muse,  
To write a kind love song.”

Yet it never occurred to him, as he himself expresses it, to trouble the world with his “dull, insipid, thowless rhyme,”

“Till your kind muse, wi' friendly blast,  
First tooted up my fame,  
And sounded loud thro' a' the wast,  
My lang-forgotten name.”

In the “Poet's Apology for Rhyming,” Lapraik soliloquizes in a sensible strain—

“No satire keen shall make me rage,  
Ev'n tho' my fate were worse;  
My head's grown empty by old age,  
But not so toom's my purse!

My means and credit, fickle things,  
They both are fled and gone;  
And I my weary days maun pass  
Unheeded and unknown!

I for a feast will never fawn,  
Nor pour out my complaint:  
If welcome's hand is now withdrawn,  
I'll stay at home content.

I'll make my pottage, boil my kail,  
Remote and little known;  
With ink I'll black the other sheet,  
Regardless of man's frown.

I'm not so vain as to pretend  
To teach men to behave;  
Yet still am of a nobler mind  
Than ever be their slave.



I love a friend that's frank and free,  
 Who tells to me his mind :  
 I hate to hing upon a *hank*,  
 With *hums* and *ha's* confined."

It appears that shortly before publishing his poems, the author had entertained the notion of emigrating to America. In the prospect of this, he writes the following "Farewell to his Native Country"—

"Farewell, ye dear delightful fields,  
 Where first my breath I drew !  
 Farewell, my much respected friend,  
 I bid you all adieu !  
 For other fields and other plains,  
 And other clouds and skies ;  
 For other distant, unknown scenes,  
 I must now sail the seas !

In Spring, which decks the blooming year  
 With flowers both fresh and gay,  
 I pull'd those flowers that were so fair,  
 But now I must away.  
 I wonder'd at the scene so gay,  
 With colours of such hue ;  
 In innocence I spent each day,  
 Yet bid those days adieu !

In ease I spent my youthful days ;  
 My friends they me carest ;  
 Quite free of care, in sports and plays,  
 I was supremely blest !  
 I ne'er envied the rich and great,  
 Nor did I wealth pursue ;  
 Yet now I leave my native *seat*,  
 And bid a long adieu !

When standing on yon river side,  
 Where trees and bushes grow,  
 Where Nature's deck'd in flow'ry pride,  
 And murm'ring streams do flow,  
 I listened to the pleasing strain  
 That echo'd thro' the vale—  
 No longer here I must remain,  
 And so I bid farewell !

My native spot, on banks of *Ayr*,  
 May sweets adorn thy soil !  
 Let Nature's blooming face so fair,  
 Aye bless thee with her smile !  
 Let flow'rs of every various kind,  
 Each colour and each hue,  
 Produce such sweets as suit the mind  
 Of every friend that's true.

You friends who graced my little book,  
 And share my joy and woe,  
 May health and peace still be your lot,  
 And wealth still on you flow !  
 Your friendship I shall ne'er forget ;  
 I'll to your memory kneel !

To every friend, with aching heart  
 I bid a sad farewell !"

These quotations are probably more than sufficient to satisfy the curiosity of the reader. Though displaying little, indeed, of the genius of poetry, the productions of Lapraik are characterised by good sense and justness of observation ; and breathe so much the spirit of philanthropic independence as fairly to establish claim to the title of the "bould Lapraik, the king o' hearts," bestowed upon him by Burns. One other extract and we have done. It is—

"THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF DUNDONALD'S WELCOME TO AYRSHIRE.

*July, 1787.*

Hail, great Dundonald ! wise and sage,  
 Bright ornament of this our age !  
 Thy virtues great, and god-like skill,  
 With grateful joy each heart do fill !

Each proud philosopher doth see,  
 And owns himself excell'd by thee :  
 They waste their time in dry disputes,  
 Whilst thou by practice show'st its fruits,

Men now no more need fetch from far  
 That useful article called *tar* ;  
 Great Britain's thunder now may roar  
 In dreadful claps from shore to shore !  
 With joy we see her men-of-war  
 Secured by thy matchless tar,  
 That worms in vain their force employ,  
 Their war-like bottoms to destroy.  
 With it bedaub'd, they longer last  
 Than they were sheathed with *metal cast*.  
 The furious waves may dash in vain ;  
 Their well-pitch'd sides do firm remain ;  
 Corroding Time's destructive force,  
 In ages scarce can make them worse.

Ill fortune, with redoubled blow,  
 Had long laid Ayrshire very low !  
 Her manufactures and her trade  
 Seem'd ruin'd quite, without remead ;  
 One blink of hope did scarce remain  
 That e'er she flourish would again,  
 That woeful bank, that *plague of plagues*,  
 Had fairly kick'd her off her legs.

As Phœbus with his glorious light  
 Dispels the gloomy shades of night,  
 The world that late in darkness lay,  
 Transported, hails the cheerful day ;  
 So Ayrshire lifts her drooping head,



Erewhile in gloomy darkness laid,  
And casting round her wond'ring eyes,  
Beholds Dundonald great arise ;  
And stretching forth a gen'rous hand,  
To save from death a ruin'd land !

But chief Muirkirk, a poor starved place,  
With hunger painted in its face,  
With joy may bless the happy day,  
That e'er your lordship came this way."

This address to the late Lord Dundonald, refers to a bright period in that unfortunate nobleman's history. Much given to scientific pursuits, he made various useful discoveries, and among others that of a peculiar tar, extracted from coal, found to be an excellent preventive of rot in vessels, from which our navy formerly suffered so severely, that in the course of a few months ships of the line were frequently rendered unfit for service. Lord Dundonald first obtained a patent for his discovery, and subsequently an Act of Parliament, securing it to him and his heirs for twenty years. Immediately upon procuring this, his lordship formed what was termed the "British Coal Tar Company," in which he is understood to have embarked the greater part of his fortune. Muirkirk, on account of its minerals, was selected as a suitable district for the operations of the company—ground was feued, pits sunk, and a range of buildings erected for carrying on the chemical process. The works, begun in 1785, were the following year nearly in full operation. Besides tar, the company manufactured paint, oil, salts, and magnesia ; and for a time success seemed so certain that Lord Dundonald refused an annuity of five or six thousand a year, offered him by an English company for the surrender

of his patent. Never were hopes more speedily blighted. The plan of sheathing vessels with copper having been soon after adopted, the use of Lord Dundonald's pitch for marine purposes was almost entirely superseded. The sudden close of the chief market upon which his lordship had calculated, proved ruinous to his hopes of prosperity. Notwithstanding, the works continued in operation for some time, first under the management of Admiral Keith Stewart, and latterly of John Loudon M'Adam the celebrated road-improver. The buildings are now nearly in ruins, and are partially appropriated to the use of the Iron Works, which, commencing about the year 1787, have since been carried on with increasing prosperity. Lord Dundonald was a patriotic, but speculative and unfortunate nobleman. He died at Paris, at an advanced age, on the 1st July, 1831, in great penury.

The subsequent history of Lapraik admits of little detail. About 1796, when far advanced in years, he gave up the mill, and for a year or two lived in a house which had been built for an inn at Nether Wellwood by Admiral Keith Stewart. On leaving this he removed to Muirkirk, where he opened a small public-house in a corner land leading from the main street to the church, which at the same time served as the village post-office, the venerable poet, through the kindness of his friends, having been installed into that important trust. Here he lived much respected till his death, which occurred on the 7th May, 1807, in the eightieth year of his age.

### XXXIII.—ALL ABOUT CLARINDA.

BY ROBERT FORD.

FROM THE "PEOPLE'S FRIEND."

To the question "Who was Clarinda?" there are few persons of mature growth in Scotland who would not glibly answer, "Mrs. M'Lehose." And further to this the most elementary and superficial student of Scottish poetical literature could tell that she formed a conspicuous figure among the dozen or more women who at one time or another made

havoc of the heart of the National Poet. The full and particular account of the sadly chequered and interesting career of Clarinda, however, who, according to Burns's own written statement, had "wit and wisdom more murderously fascinating than the stiletto of the Sicilian bandit or the poisoned arrow of the savage African," is common knowledge



only to the curious, who are the few. A brief sketch of the lady's career, together with a bird's-eye review of the Clarinda-Sylvander correspondence, will therefore not be unwelcome here; as nought can ever be unwelcome to Scottish readers which comes so near to the heart of Robert Burns as to treat of one whose grace and beauty and intellectual superiority evoked his unqualified admiration—one who loved him with her whole heart and soul, and was the heroine of at least two of the most vivid and tenderly passionate lyrics that came from his pen. I mean "A'e Fond Kiss" and "My Nannie's Awa"—the former a parting song in which the stanza occurs

"Had we never loved sae kindly,  
Had we never loved sae blindly,  
Never met—or never parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

Making four lines of which Sir Walter Scott has proudly remarked, "they contain the essence of a thousand love tales."

Mrs. M'Lehose, whose maiden name was Agnes Craig, was no ordinary person, and had no ordinary antecedents. She was grandniece by her mother's side of the house of Colin M'Laurin, the celebrated mathematician and friend of Sir Isaac Newton; and he was brother of M'Laurin, the divine, at one time the minister of Luss, on Lochlomond-side, and latterly of St. David's parish in Glasgow, whose sermon "Glorying in the Cross of Christ" has been described as the most eloquent in the English language. The daughter of a Glasgow surgeon named Craig—a gentleman also of good family, which had its representatives on the judicial bench as well as in the pulpit—she was born here in April 1759—the same year, be it noted, in which the song celebrated "blast o' Jan'war' win' blew han'sel in on Robin"—Miss Craig, when only eight years old, had the misfortune to lose her mother. But she grew and prospered apace, and by the time she had reached her fifteenth birthday she was regarded as one of the beauties of the western capital, and had received the distinctive and complimentary title of "Pretty Miss Nancy." In her sixteenth year she was sent to an Edinburgh boarding-school to complete her education. But previous to this her beauty

had attracted the attention of a Mr. James M'Lehose, a law agent in Glasgow. Up to this time he had failed to obtain an introduction to her; but on learning that she was going to Edinburgh, he engaged all the seats on the stage-coach except the one which he studiously allowed to be taken for her. The opportunity thus secured of ingratiating himself in the favour of the handsome young damsel Mr. M'Lehose took the utmost pains to improve, and being possessed of an attractive person and most insinuating manners, by the time their forty miles' journey was completed he had made a very favourable impression on the young lady's mind. On her return to Glasgow, after an absence of six months, he resumed his suit, and pretty Miss Nancy Craig duly became Mrs. M'Lehose in July 1776, being then little more than seventeen years old. The union was not a happy one, and when two children had been born to them a separation ensued.

"Only a short time had elapsed," said Mrs. M'Lehose, many years afterwards, "ere I perceived, with inexpressible regret, that our dispositions, tempers, and sentiments were so totally different as to banish all hopes of happiness. Our disagreements rose to such a height, and my husband's treatment was so cruel, that it was thought advisable by my friends that a separation should take place, which accordingly followed in December 1780."

Shortly afterwards the husband, who seems to have been in no way worthy of such an amiable and attractive wife, sailed for Jamaica in the West Indies, where he held latterly the post of chief clerk of the Court of Common Pleas, and died in March 1812.

After the separation Mrs. M'Lehose with her two children returned to her father's house, where she remained till his death, which event occurred two years subsequently. She then took up her permanent residence in Edinburgh, and lived in comfortable enough circumstances on the proceeds of a life-annuity judiciously invested in her behalf by her deceased parent. Here, though comparatively a stranger, we are told, her youth, beauty, and exemplary conduct, together with the story of her domestic misfortunes, procured her many valuable and interesting friends.



In the closing months of the year 1787 the Scottish capital literally rang with the praises of the ploughman-poet. He was the local intellectual star of the period, and nightly claimed the admiration of all admirers. Everybody who was anybody was securing an introduction to him and enjoying the luxury of an evening in his company in the house of one or other of the literary savants of the city. By the good offices of a mutual friend—Miss Nimmo—it was arranged that Mrs. M'Lehose should meet the poet. They accordingly met and spent an agreeable evening together, just as the poet was preparing to leave Edinburgh, and a mutual esteem—perhaps we should say admiration—instantly sprang up between them. A second meeting was arranged; but in the interval Burns had an unlucky fall from a coach, which so bruised one of his knees that when the evening in question arrived he found himself unable to leave his room. This circumstance delayed his departure, and led to a correspondence—which each of the two parties began by signing the initials of their own names to their epistles—and, after the first few letters had passed, conducted as between “Sylvander” and “Clarinda,” the first being the counterfeit signature of the poet, and the latter that of his fair *inamorata*. How much Burns was disappointed by not being able to keep his tryst is shown by his letter of the 8th December, wherein he wrote—“I never met with a person in my life whom I more anxiously wished to meet again than yourself. To-night I was to have that very great pleasure. I was intoxicated with the idea, and if I don't see you again I shall not rest in my grave for chagrin.” Mrs. M'Lehose's reply on the same date is—“You shall *not* leave town without seeing me, if I should come along with good Miss Nimmo, and call for you. I am determined to see you.” As soon as Burns was sufficiently recovered from his accident he visited Clarinda at her own house, on Saturday the 19th January, and the result of the meeting was the intensification of their mutual regard and esteem. Indeed, it was now the utter intoxication of love between them, and the poet is ready to exclaim “Clarinda, first of your sex! if ever I am the veriest wretch on earth to forget

you! if ever your lovely image is effaced from my soul—

‘ May I be lost, no eye to weep my end,  
And find no earth that's base enough to bury me.’ ”

The awkwardness of their relationship, it is fair to state, was ever present to both. Clarinda warns her admirer again and again that he is corresponding with a married woman, and how imperative it is for the fair reputation of both that reason should govern all their words and actions; from affairs of the heart she bytimes endeavours to engage the poet in concerns of the soul, but they are both hopelessly entangled in the meshes of Love's subtle net, and only the enforced departure of Burns from Edinburgh in the middle of February could make them “tear themselves asunder.”

They met only once afterwards, in 1791, but occasionally corresponded until within a short period of the poet's death, which occurred in July 1796.

Burns has been blamed by several of his biographers for his connection with Clarinda in the face of his previous engagement with Jean Armour, while others have contended that he was justified in believing that his engagement with Jean had come to an end. All we know with certainty is, that soon after his return to the country, his differences with Jean Armour and her family were speedily made up, and Jean and he forthwith became man and wife. So far as Burns was affected by it, the subsequent events fairly proved that the Sylvander-Clarinda affair was only for the moment rapturous, and once out of his sight, Clarinda was soon very much out of his mind. With the lady, however, it was markedly different. She loved the poet with a burning and imperishable love—a love which did not fade when she knew of his marriage with another—a love which did not cease when she heard of his death. In one of her warm, beautiful, and undoubtedly sincere letters we find her saying:—“Never were there two hearts formed so exactly alike as ours. Oh, let the scenes of Nature remind you of Clarinda! In winter remember the dark shades of her fate; in summer, the warmth of her friendship; in autumn, her glowing wishes to bestow plenty on all; and let spring animate you with hopes that your



friend may yet surmount the wintry blasts of life, and revive to taste a springtime of happiness. At all events, Sylvander, the storms of life will quickly pass, and 'one unbounded spring encircle all.' Love there is not a crime. I charge you to meet me there. O, God! I must lay down my pen." In her private diary, written forty years after the date of her last interview with the poet, she has this entry:—"6th December, 1831,—This day I never can forget. Parted with Robert Burns in the year 1791, never more to meet in this world. Oh, may we meet in heaven!" And Robert Chambers says:—"I have heard Clarinda, at seventy-five express the same hope to meet in another sphere the one heart that she had ever found herself able entirely to sympathize with, but which had been divided from her by such pitiless obstacles."

Subsequent to Burns's death, editor after editor of the poet's complete works—including Currie and Cunningham—endeavoured to get hold of the entire correspondence herein referred to, but Mrs. M'Lehose, long and oft, with stern resolution, refused to deliver up her replies for publication. Allan Cunningham, when preparing the last volumes of his edition of Burns, penned the lady a long and earnest request, in which he said—"Without the letters of Clarinda, the Works of Burns will be incomplete. I wish to publish them at the beginning of the eighth volume, with a short introduction, in which their scope and aim will be characterised. You will oblige me and delight your country by giving permission for this. I will do it with all due tenderness. I have a high respect for your character and talents, and wish you to reflect

that the world will in time have a full command over the letters, and that ruder hands than mine will likely deal with them." But still she would not be drawn, and many years had to elapse until the main bulk of the curious and interesting correspondence was laid bare to the public eye. Even now, it is only included in the more sumptuous and expensive of the recent editions of the poet's works, and in no single instance with so full an account of Clarinda and her relationship to Burns as is contained in this brief paper.

Mrs. M'Lehose died in 1843 having survived Burns by the long period of forty-five years. In the poet's time she lived with her two children in a tenement-house in General's Entry, Edinburgh, the position of which is now occupied by one of the Public Schools of the city. It is due to her memory to state here that once at least in the course of her unfortunate grasswidowhood, she evinced an inclination to rejoin her faithless husband, and with this purpose set sail with her children to Jamaica in the year 1792. On presenting herself there, however, Mr. M'Lehose insisted upon her immediate return, on the ground that the climate would not agree with her, and she accordingly returned in the same ship that had taken her out. Latterly in Edinburgh she lived in rather humble circumstances in a small flat in a house in the Greenside. In the last days of her life she never wearied of telling the story of her flirtation with Burns, and when showing to her cronies his faded love-letters, it has been said "she would just greet like a bairn."

Poor, loving, charming, trusting, witty, unhappy Clarinda! She loved not wisely, but too well.

#### XXXIV.—ANECDOTES OF BURNS.

CONTRIBUTED BY GEORGE SAVAGE, ESQ.

BURNS was noted among his boon companions for his wit and humour, and the anecdotes of him which fortunately have been transmitted to us show that he possessed conversational gifts of the most brilliant character. While at Moffat with Clark, the composer, the poet called for a bumper of brandy. "O! not a bumper" said the musician, "I prefer two small glasses." "Two small

glasses!" cried Burns, "You are like the lass in Kyle, she said she would rather be kissed twice bareheaded than once with her bonnet on." It is also related that Burns, hearing words of condemnation of the niggardliness of a rich man, who, after being saved from drowning, gave his gallant rescuer only a sixpence, exclaimed, "surely, friends, the gentleman is the best judge of the value of his own life."



## XXXV.—BURNS'S "DEIL."

BY JOHN MUIR.

"What news the day, Humphrey?" queried Burns as he accosted his polemical disputant. "News!" quoth the mason, "have ye no' heard that the Deil's dead? And what's mair, the supreme council o' Hell has elected a successor; and wha d'ye think he is?" "I cannot imagine," said the poet. "Od, man," said Humphrey, "by a sweeping majority they've chosen Rab Burns!"—*Anecdote*.

AT the time the above conversation took place the Deil was not actually dead, although our poet had dealt him a mortal blow, and, according to authentic tradition, had even been at the trouble of digging a grave in one of his own fields in which to bury the dead carcase of his effete phantomship, so determined was he to deliver his country from the thralldom of this chimera, which for centuries before had been the dread of the people, and whose shadow had darkened the land for ages. George Gilfillan, in his life of Burns, gives this story, which is worth repeating here:—"What are you doing there?" asked the boy. 'Making a grave for the Deil,' replied Burns. 'Catch him first,' cried the boy, on which the poet exploded in convulsions of laughter. The mention of the Deil always tickled rather than terrified the author of the 'Address.'

It is true that only in a metaphorical sense can Burns be considered as the Deil's successor. The poet, as the representative of reason and well-directed intelligence, may be said to have usurped the sway of Auld Mahoun; and the success of his *coup de Satan* may be gathered from a glance at the bibliographies, which are teeming with all manner of "answers" purporting to have emanated from the expiring fiend. To the "unco guid" this famous production has always seemed the very embodiment of heterodoxy, the author of which was in very truth—

A son o' Belial, a daurin' chiel,  
Wha wrote a letter to the very deil.

With the "unco bad," on the other hand, it has been lauded to the skies as the manifesto of those who are struggling to bring about a progressive theology, and a religion untrammelled by mythological machinery.

The "Address" was written in the winter of 1785, shortly after the composition of "The Cottar's Saturday Night." The poet's

brother Gilbert, in a letter to Dr. Currie, dated from Mossgiel, April 2, 1798, gives the following brief account of its origin:—

"It was, I think, in the winter following, as we were going together with carts for coal to the family fire (and I could yet point out the particular spot) that the author first repeated to me the "Address to the Deil." The curious idea of such an address was suggested to him by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have, from various quarters, of this august personage."

The most cursory study of Burns's "Address," and the numerous allusions to the Evil One scattered throughout the poetical and prose works of Burns, is sufficient to demonstrate that the popular conception of his fantastic majesty must have been an unfailing source of amusement to the poet in his jovial moods, and a most fascinating subject on which to exercise his mind in his creative moments. We say the popular conception, because Burns's Deil is essentially the vulgar black Deil of Scottish superstition, modified to meet the exigencies of eighteenth-century Scots Calvinism; and although the poem is not, perhaps, of the highest value as a work of art, charged with genuine poetry, as a rhymed exposition of the Satanical elements of Scottish ecclesiasticism it has no equal, and the closing verse is sufficient in itself to have secured immortality to any production.

It is a curious fact, for example, that although Burns, as we can see from a footnote appended to the 19th verse, had read Milton's "Paradise Lost" previous to the composition of his "Address," there is scarcely a trace of Miltonic influence in this and subsequent poems in which his sable majesty plays a part. The Puritan poet could not have influenced Burns to any appreciable extent. Milton started out with the Biblical



conception of Satan as an actual personality, a fallen angel, doomed to perdition for rebelling against the Most High. He believed as firmly in the existence of the Devil as if he had actually seen and conversed with him, which, of course, he never hoped to do. Burns, on the contrary, did not believe in the existence of the Deil. A religious man from the core to the finger-tips, he could not reconcile the two contradictory statements of a maleficent being warring against an all-powerful Deity. It was a monstrous and hideous conception of the All-Good repugnant to human reason, and one which Burns determined to do his utmost to abolish, which he has almost succeeded in doing, many thanks to him.

The Rev. Alexander Webster, of Kilmar-nock, then of Aberdeen, published a very ingenious book, the popularity of which is attested by the fact that the author has in view the preparation of the third edition. In "Burns and the Kirk," which is the title of Mr. Webster's little duodecimo volume, the author formulates a theory with regard to the poems of Burns, which, although pushed too far in some respects, is remarkably fresh, original, and vigorously worked out; and in our opinion is one of the most important contributions to the study of Burns which has been made for several years. Mr. Webster has some pithy remarks, which we take the liberty of transcribing before passing on to the consideration of the poem, preparatory to a comparison of it with other poems in a similar strain selected from the works of modern European poets:—

"As one of the people, Burns knew how universal and oppressive the fear of the Devil was. When anything mysterious was experienced, the Devil was believed to be in it. When the churn or loom went out of order, it was owing to the Devil's malicious interference, when the wind blew with sudden ominous gust, making the whole house quake, it was the Devil flying past in furious rage; when the evening breeze went sighing o'er the dyke, or rustling through the hedge, it was the Devil 'bummin'; when the belated traveller saw in the moonlight some shadowy shape, and heard an 'eldritch croon,' it was the Devil; everything dark,

inexplicable, terrible, was the work of Satan, In every shadow, unfamiliar sound, pain, mishap, and death, there was something of 'the evil one.' A wild night was one in which 'a child might understand the Deil had business on his hand.' Hardly a man would go out at night in an unknown place without crossing himself or saying some protective spell. The dark side of things was the Devil's kingdom, and in presence of it the Scottish people stood in abject fear. The dread paralysed mind and limb. Superstition prevented science; free thought was sacrilege; to doubt the existence of Satan was blasphemy. Men had to drink to make themselves brave in the darkness, and the fear of the Devil actually fostered drunkenness."

Burns took a very effective way of showing the utter absurdity of the belief in the Deil. Summoning the hobgoblin to his presence, he addressed him in the most mocking style, and commenced by enumerating his different titles. Then in a rapid recital of his various deeds he brings his case to a climax in these two stanzas:—

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,  
The stars shot down wi' sklentan light,  
Wi' you, *mysel'*, I gat a fright,  
Ayont the lough;  
Ye, like a *rash-buss*, stood in sight,  
Wi' waving sugh.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,  
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,  
When wi' an eldritch, stoor *quaick, quaick*,  
Amang the springs,  
Awa ye squatter'd like a *drake*,  
On whistling wings.

Here the *drake* spoiled everything. Had the same adventure befallen an ordinary countryman as is here narrated (autobiographically, no doubt), Auld Sandy would have got the credit of the *quaick, quaick*; but Burns, tracing effects to their natural causes, discerned in the "eldritch croon" the frightened cry of a water-fowl. The poet, unlike the majority of his countrymen at that time, did not believe that Satan could assume the form of a drake on purpose to startle an honest farmer returning home at the witch hour. It makes one almost shudder to think that our forefathers could have believed such insipid stuff, and that, too, in the name of religion.



Indeed there is more than enough evidence to show that the clergy, especially those of the Auld (dim, we should rather say) Light persuasion, to whom the Devil was an indispensable auxiliary, used every means in their power to foster these degrading beliefs.

Witness the contempt Burns has for the power of the Devil and the satanical delight he takes in taunting the dethroned monarch. He actually dares to smile in his dusky countenance, and with a roguish twinkle in his dark eye promises—

He'll turn a corner jinkin,  
An' cheat you yet.

But the worst is yet to come. The poet unconsciously braced himself with Danton's energetic and terrible maxim—*De l'audace, encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace!* Having exhausted all the stores of his imagination in heaping contempt, ridicule, and derision on the poor culprit, there yet remained the shaft of love. Like a judge giving a good advice to a condemned criminal, the poet implores him to mend his ways and reform—in short, advises him not to be as black as he is painted—

But fare-you-weel, auld *Nickie-ben* !  
O wad ye tak a thought an' men' !  
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—  
Still hae a stake—  
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,  
Ev'n for your sake !

And so his sable and satanic majesty  
vanishes from our poet's tableau.

To those of our readers who are acquainted with the works of Edgar Allan Poe it will assist them greatly in understanding the character of Charles Baudelaire to state that he is the author of the best translation into French of the American poet's works. In many respects Baudelaire is quite as unique a personality in literary history as the author of the "Raven." He had the same fine artistic perceptions, perhaps more cultured than in Poe's case, and certainly he had a wider and better, as well as a truer, knowledge of art in its technical aspects than the American poet.

His enemies bitterly contended that there was something essentially satanical about

Baudelaire, and we confess with some show of reason. *Don Juan aux enfers*, *Danse macabre*, etc., seem to favour this theory. Indeed, the title of the first volume is in itself sufficient to substantiate the accusation. *Fleurs du Mal* ! Faugh ! the whole thing smells of brimstone, and I seem to feel the unhealthy warmth of Satan's hoofs as I turn over the pages of the book, and when I come to the division entitled "Revolte," and pause at page 332, on which begin, "*Les Litanies de Satan*," I give an involuntary shudder. This is only a passing feeling, however, and after reading the refrain—*O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !*—I begin to feel more at ease, as by and by the murky gloom of Hades disappears.

These Litanies of Baudelaire's are conceived and expressed with studied irony, of an iciness sufficient almost to freeze the most mercurial of readers ; and the poem is as widely different from Burns' "Address" as it is possible to wish. For the benefit of the unlearned reader, even at the risk of offending the more scholarly with my rude translation, I will endeavour to give one or two of the verses an English dress. But, first of all, M. Gautier having a sensible word to offer on the subject, I translate the following passage in preference to anything of my own :—

The "Litanies de Satan," the god of wickedness and prince of the world, is one of those icy ironical pieces so familiar to the author, which we do him an injustice to attribute to his impiety. There was no impiety in the nature of Baudelaire, who firmly believed in the lofty principles (*Mathématique supérieure*) established by God from all eternity, the least violation of which is punished with cruel chastisements, not only in the present life, but in that which is to come. If he has depicted vice and shown Satan in all his pomps, it is certainly not because he has any liking for it."

Now, we rather think, with all due deference to M. Gautier's better knowledge, that he *did* like it. At least that is the impression the poem makes on us, and if we could only succeed in conveying the sense of the original to the reader, I venture to think we could win his suffrage. Take this as a specimen :—



O thou, wisest and most beautiful of Angels,  
Deceived by God and Destiny, deprived of worship,  
O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

O exiled Prince, to whom much injury hath been  
done,  
And who, though conquered, redoubtest thy strength,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Thou who knowest all, great guardian of the nether  
world,  
And common healer of all human ills,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Thou who, by Death, thy old and faithful paramour,  
Begotest Hope—alluring distraction !

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Thou who givest the culprit a calm engaging look  
Which sinks into the hearts of those around the  
pillory,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Who knowest in what secret places may be found  
The precious stones a jealous God hath hid,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Whose hand upholdeth on the fearful height  
The wandering sleeper in his mad career,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

Sustainer of exiles, guide of inventors ;  
Confessor of the doomed and vile malefactors,

O Satan, have compassion on my dreary wretched-  
ness !

## PRIÈRE.

Gloire et louange a toi, Satan, dans les hauteurs  
Du Ciel, où tu régnas, et dans les profondeurs  
De l'Enfer, où, vaincu, tu rêves en silence !  
Fais que mon âme un jour, sous l'Arbre de Science,  
Près de toi se repose, à l'heure ou sur ton front  
Comme un Temple nouveau ses rameaux s'épandront !

The Satan to whom these Litanies and Supplication are addressed, compared with Burns's flesh-and-blood Deil, is a mere shining abstraction. But we need not blame Baudelaire, or feel anyway disappointed at the result. The Scottish Deil is not the French Satan. We must judge a poet's work from the poet's point of view, and not from our point of view, or according to our preconceived notions on the subject. We must accept what Baudelaire has to give us, not because it differs from, or agrees with, Burns, or any other poet, but simply because it is his.

It were a vain hope, perhaps, to expect that these Litanies will ever occupy the place in French literature which we in Scotland, and everywhere throughout the British-speaking world, accord to Burns's "Address;" not because the latter reaches a higher level of poetic beauty and metrical art. Perhaps it is inferior in these respects to Baudelaire's. But it appeals to a constituency that must ever form the larger portion of society, and this and other reasons, such as racial idiosyncrasies and national partiality, will tend to keep aglow the fires of genius lying mouldering in the works of our great and glorious bard.

## XXXVI.—SONNET TO BURNS.

BY RALPH SHAW.

EACH bonny gem remindeth me o' thee,  
Thee wha didst sing sae sweetly o' its blush,  
In mony a lay whose beauty's fu' as flush,  
As is the gowan's when morn doth ope her  
e'e.

I canna list unto the burnie's glee,  
Nor to the warbler's wildly carolled lay,  
Wi' na a thocht o' thee, wha wast sae gay,  
Wha poured thy soul in sic sweet melody.

Yes, Burns, in a' my ramblin' thou art nigh,  
A guid, mysterious presence, which doth  
lend  
A charm to Nature, an' itsel' doth blend  
In Nature's sel'. Thou sigh'st in Nature's  
sigh,  
Wi' her thou liv'st, and thou wi' her shalt  
cease,  
For ye are ane, in turbulence an' peace.



## XXXVII.—BURNS AND TENNYSON.

BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM MINTO.

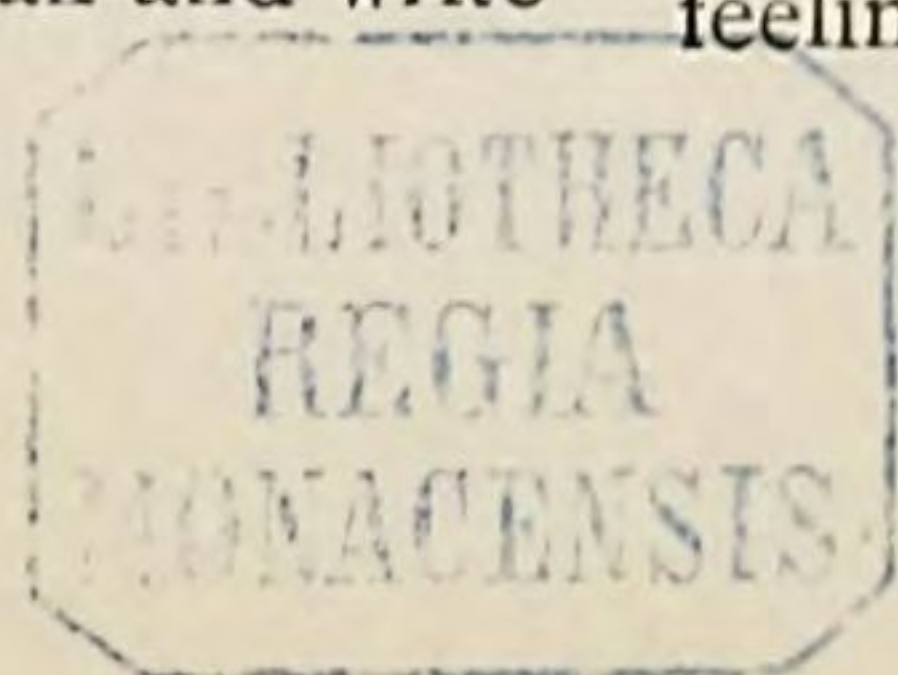
FROM THE "ABERDEEN FREE PRESS," October 18th, 1892.

My own thoughts since Tennyson's death have taken their turn from a local accident. A few weeks before, we had, as you know, put up a statue to another of the immortals, Robert Burns. At first sight there would not seem to be much in common between the two poets thus accidentally thrust together upon our minds, and the outward differences between them in their lives and their works are so sharp and pronounced that they would hardly seem to afford materials for an instructive comparison. Both were poets, one might say, and there the resemblance ends. Possibly that is so, though I think you will find in both a certain magnanimity, a largeness and strength of soul, which is one of the characteristics of true greatness. But contrasts are often instructive as well as parallels, and certain questions are inevitably forced upon us when we happen to think of two such poets as Burns and Tennyson together. How were they received when they first appeared among men? Was their greatness recognised at once? And what is the secret of the enduring fame of Burns? Why do his admirers still delight to show their love and veneration for his memory by putting up statues to him? Why do thousands every year make a pilgrimage to Ayrshire to look at the house where he was born and the scenes amidst which he lived and wrote? Though he has been dead for more than a hundred years, he is still through his verse as near and dear to his worshippers as Tennyson is to his. A hundred years hence will grateful admirers raise statues to Tennyson as they now do to Burns? Will thousands flock to Aldworth and Freshwater as they now flock to Alloway and Dumfries? What will happen a hundred years hence, we cannot of course tell; though we may entertain our fancies with the question. But what has happened is matter of history, and there was sufficient difference between the first reception of our two poets to furnish matter for reflection. I have had occasion more than once to speak and write

of the reception of Burns by his contemporaries, but I will make no apology for referring to it once more: because I know that however often I and others repeat the plain facts, crowds of people will go on believing the contrary. There is nothing more invulnerable than a well-established myth, and you will encounter many of them in the course of your studies of literary history.

## BURNS'S EARLIER EFFORTS.

It is a popular belief that because Burns died a poor gauger in Dumfries, tormented in his last hours by the bitterest pangs of poverty, his genius was not rightly appreciated in his lifetime, and that it was not till years after his death that men began to speak of him, in Carlyle's language, as "one of the most considerable men of the eighteenth century." Carlyle's account of the matter is that fine ladies and gentlemen of Edinburgh made a nine days' wonder of the Ayrshire ploughman, and then dropt him like an exhausted plaything and left him to perish miserable and neglected. That Burns died in misery is unhappily too true. His death-bed was very different from that of which you have lately been reading. It was one of the most unspeakably painful of scenes: one cannot bear to think of it. We may well believe that many of his patrons were stung with remorse when they heard how their poet died, and it has been a subject of obloquy to them ever since. The honours paid to him by his countrymen after his death may have partly been prompted by an unreasoning desire to make some amends. But who was to blame? The poet himself had far too much manliness, too much grandeur of spirit, to lay the blame on anybody but himself, and hard as we may find it to acquiesce in this, it is probably the truth. But none the less it is true that the one thing on which the poet's heart was set, the acknowledgement of his genius, was given to him by high and low, lettered and unlettered, in unstinted measure. "To the feeling and susceptible," wrote his first re-





viewer, Henry Mackenzie, in the "Lounger" of December 9, 1786, "there is something wonderfully pleasing in the contemplation of genius, of that super-eminent reach of mind by which some men are distinguished. In the view of highly superior talents, as in that of great and stupendous natural objects, there is a sublimity which fills the soul with wonder and delight." Mackenzie went on to remark upon the difficulty of recognising genius in contemporaries, and to assert his conviction that although "the divinity of genius which admiration is found to worship, is best arrayed in the darkness of distant and remote periods," he is face to face with its true divinity in the poems of Burns. "If I am not greatly deceived, I think we may safely pronounce him a genius of no ordinary rank. The person to whom I allude is Robert Burns, an Ayrshire ploughman, whose poems were some time ago published in a country town in the west of Scotland, with no other ambition, it would seem, than to circulate among the inhabitants of the country where he was born, to obtain a little fame from those who had heard of his talents. I hope I shall not be thought to assume too much if I endeavour to place him in a higher point of view, to call for a verdict of his country on the merit of his works, and to claim for him those honours which their excellence appears to deserve." Mackenzie is most explicit in saying that while the circumstances of the Ayrshire ploughman add to the wonder of his productions, it is simply and solely on their merits, and without any plea for special indulgence, that he claims a verdict. Whoever cares to read his article will see how absurd it is to suppose that Carlyle was the first to appreciate the genius of Burns.

#### TENNYSON'S RECEPTION AS A POET.

The first reception of Alfred Tennyson by the potentates of letters was much more mixed. He had from the first admirers and backers among his personal friends, which is not to be wondered at when we take note that his first volume, published at the age of twenty, contained "Mariana in the Moated Grange." But the claims made for him by his friends, seemed to some others so extravagant by comparison with its actual achievement at that early age, that opposition was provoked.

Christopher North considered it his duty to give "the ingenious lad," as he called the young poet, an admonition with his crutch. You know the ingenious lad's retort, I dare say, though he magnanimously suppressed it in the later edition of his works:—

"You did late review my lays,  
Crusty Christopher.  
You did mingle blame and praise,  
Rusty Christopher.

When I knew from whom it came,  
I at once forgave the blame,  
Musty Christopher:  
I could not forgive the praise,  
Fusty Christopher."

It is interesting now, when all the journals and even the churches are competing in respectful eulogy, and surviving bards, some of them, perhaps with an eye to the reversion of the laurel, are laying their graceful tributes on his hearse, to turn back and see what was said of Alfred Tennyson sixty years ago. It is only fair to Christopher, whose bones have been dust for so many years, to remember that in his day and generation, with all the whimsical extravagance of humour which has now gone out of fashion, he was one of the most generous of critics, and it is better, with a view to understanding the spirit of the praise that he mingled with the blame, to read the conclusion of his review first, lest we should be tempted by the boisterous ridicule of the opening to throw it aside in disgust. "Our critique," Christopher says, "is near its conclusion; and, in correcting it for press, we see that its whole merit, which is great, consists in the extracts, which are, 'beautiful exceedingly.' Perhaps in the first part of our article we may have exaggerated Mr. Tennyson's not infrequent silliness, for we are apt to be carried away by the whim of the moment, and in our humorous moods, many things wear a queer look to our aged eyes which fill young pupils with tears, but we feel assured that in the second part we have not exaggerated his strength—that we have done no more than justice to his fine faculties—and that the millions who delight in *Maga* will with one voice, confirm our judgment—that Alfred Tennyson is a poet." A good deal of blame, in the case of a poet of twenty, might be forgiven in consideration of such praise as this—by all but the subject



of it. It is but just also to Christopher to notice that he quoted with marks of warm admiration, "Mariana," and "Oriana," and the "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," and that most of the pieces that he objected to were afterwards suppressed or modified by the poet. But some of the boisterous ridicule, with its old-fashioned horse-play, its rough extravagance of grinning mockery, certainly looks queer enough now in the light of Tennyson's full-blown reputation. It is easy now to read between the lines, and see what it was that roused rusty Christopher's wrath. The young poet had been praised by his friends in certain London *Reviews*, with a warmth that seemed excessive then, whatever may be thought of it now, and there was a feud between literary Edinburgh and the "Cockneys." And Christopher's ridicule was directed as much against the reviewers as the poets themselves. "One of the saddest misfortunes," he said, "that can befall a young poet is to be the pet of a coterie; and the very saddest of all, if in Cockneydom. Such has been the unlucky lot of Alfred Tennyson. He has been elevated to the throne of Little Britain, and sonnets were showered over his coronation from the most remote regions of his empire, even from Hampstead Hill," (the residence, you will remember, of Leigh Hunt, one of the Edinburgh critic's pet aversions). Again:—"The 'Englishman's Magazine' ought not to have died; for it threatened to be a very pleasant periodical. An essay 'On the Genius of Alfred Tennyson,' sent it to the grave. The superhuman—nay, supernatural—pomposity of that one paper, incapacitated the whole work for living one day longer in this unceremonious world. The solemnity with which the critic approached the object of his adoration, and the sanctity with which he laid his offerings on the shrine, were too much for our irreligious age. The essay 'On the Genius of Alfred Tennyson,' awoke a general guffaw, and it expired in convulsions. Yet the essay was exceedingly well written—as well as if it had been 'On the Genius of Sir Isaac Newton.' Therein lay the mistake. Sir Isaac Newton discovered the law of gravitation: Alfred had but written some pretty verses, and mankind were not prepared to set him among the stars.

## HIS SUBSEQUENT FAME.

But that he has genius is proved by his being at this moment alive; for had he not, he must have breathed his last under that critique." Christopher's "guffaw" sounds rather foolish now, and does not make echoes as it did in 1832. I call it back from its tomb chiefly that it may testify to the fact that even from the first Tennyson's genius had its admirers. But why not all, as in the case of Burns? Nobody disputed the greatness of the Ayrshire ploughman's genius, whatever opinions they held about the tone of some of his work. Why was there not equal unanimity about the son of the English clergyman? The answer probably is that the themes of Burns were simpler and of more universal appeal, and that his poems expressed more the strength of a many-sided personality, ranging from the rough satire of the "Holy Fair," and the broad humour of "Hallowe'en," to the touching sentiment of the "Mountain Daisy." Tennyson was a younger man, and though his mastery of verse was apparent at once, his first volume did not express his personality so fully in all the range of its powers. It was fair enough to say of much of the volume that it consisted merely of "pretty verses." The essay on his genius which moved Crusty Christopher to protest, was written by a friend, no other than Arthur Hallam, the friend whose untimely death was commemorated in "In Memoriam." His friend knew what lay behind, but this had not been revealed to the world at large. If you look at what has been written about Tennyson since his death, you will find that the grand merit claimed for him by hundreds of grateful admirers is the power of his verse to console and strengthen in the face of the great doubts and fears that perplex and disturb the estate of man. He has given voice to the spiritual troubles that thousands feel, and he has delivered to them also, in stately and majestic numbers that calm the soul as with pontifical assurance, a message of consolation and peace. But, naturally, it was not in his early manhood that he gave evidence of the bent of his genius towards such solemn themes. The first hint that he was capable of such a service to darkened and despairing humanity was in the "Two



Voices," and this was not published till 1842, twelve years after he first came before the world as a poet. Thus you will see that one reason why the genius of Tennyson did not receive from competent judges the same unqualified homage that was paid at once to the genius of Burns is to be found in the simple fact that he did not at once display the full range of his splendid powers. You will understand, I hope, that I have not raised the question of the first reception of Burns and Tennyson with any view to exalt-

ing or depreciating either of these great poets. I remember many years ago in a Union at Oxford meeting a resolution that Tennyson is our greatest poet since Milton, with an amendment to the effect that poets cannot be estimated as greater or less. And I still think there is not much good in wrangling over the reflective merits of poets, and trying to weigh them in an exact balance, when both possess in a pre-eminent degree the indescribable gift which, for want of a better name, we call poetic genius.

### XXXVIII.—BURNS AND FERGUSSON.

BY DAVID K. BROWN, TORONTO.

WHO was Fergusson and why couple his name with that of a Scottish poet, whose fame is world-wide, and whose works are known and admired even where his native dialect is as the tongue of another and unknown world? are questions that will rise to the lips of many Scotchmen, and all other readers in Canada, except the few who delight to wander amid the by-ways of literature that may be national, but is not cosmopolitan. In the noble preface to the first edition of his poems, Burns himself has given to the works of Fergusson the best introduction and recommendation they can, or could, have, when he writes: "To the glorious dawns of the poor, unfortunate Fergusson, he (Burns), with unaffected sincerity, declares that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions." Burns had him in his eye, when writing, rather with a view to kindle at his flame, than for servile imitation. The ploughman poet confesses that his efforts were largely inspired by Fergusson, as well as by Ramsay; and he is found writing from Irvine in 1781, "Rhyme I had given up" (on going to Irvine), "but meeting with Fergusson's Scottish poems I strung anew my wildly sounding lyre, with emulating vigour." Lockhart is of opinion that it was this accidental meeting with Fergusson's works and a personal sympathy with that poet's misfortunes that largely determined the Scottish character of Burns's writings. Sir Walter Scott, in one of his

letters, gives the impression which Burns made upon him, but what the future novelist thought of the poet is of little interest to us now, except inasmuch as it applies to his relations with Fergusson. Scott thought that Burns had twenty times the ability of Ramsay or of Fergusson, and that he talked of these poets as his models with too much humility, a humility for which Scott was at a loss to account, unless it were occasioned by Burns's "national predilection." It is much more probable that Burns had not yet, if indeed he ever, received an answer to his aspiration: "O wad some power the giftie gi'e us, to see oursel's as others see us." He was conscious of having lit his lamp at their flame; he was conscious that he had not proved a servile imitator, but he was not conscious that the world esteemed his efforts as much superior to those of his predecessors. Had Burns been capable of estimating his powers as of twenty times the magnitude of those of Fergusson—Scott's estimate—it is probable that Burns would not have spoken as he did of Fergusson's work, for the estimate which the Ayrshire ploughman had of his own writings was simply that they were the productions of one possessed of some poetic ability. Burns certainly was intensely Scotch, but he was not so Scotch as to make him believe that he esteemed what was worthless. Such national predilection would have been hypocrisy, and if there was one vice more abhorrent than another to Burns, that vice was hypocrisy.



It seems rather that Burns was a conscientious admirer of Fergusson; that he was incapable of finding fault with the work of one who had preceded himself in the task of embalming Scottish life in verse; that Burns felt much the same reverence for Fergusson that the student feels for his professor or his teacher; that, indeed, what measure of success attended the pupil's efforts was entirely due to the more fortunate circumstances in which the pupil found himself. Burns would, doubtless, have considered it presumption on his part to think that Fergusson could not have produced better verses than he, had the same subjects presented themselves to each. One cannot fail to be impressed with the absence of conceit in Burns's writings, just as one has impressed upon him at every step the contempt which the plain ploughman was capable of expressing for all and every species of humbug. But this contempt was never hurled from the standpoint of conceit—it was thrown from the level of simple worth. From this level of simple worth Burns also addressed his praise, and that, always with deference; so it is not trespassing upon the borders of the improbable, to affirm, as I have done, that Burns's admiration of Fergusson emanated from singleness of heart. The personal sympathy with Fergusson's misfortunes, alluded to by Lockhart, may have caused Burns to esteem Fergusson's works, but as the dawns of a great future, still I hardly consider it probable that Burns would have thought less of these works, as works, had Fergusson's career been other than it was. That the latter's early death exercised considerable influence on Burns, is undoubted, for did not Burns devote a portion of the proceeds of the second (or Edinburgh) edition of his poems to erecting a monument over the poet's grave? But did this influence, directly or only indirectly, manifest itself in Burns's works? Was this influence sufficiently individualized to show its presence in what Burns afterwards wrote? That is the question which now concerns us most to answer. I think that at most Burns's sympathy with Fergusson's misfortunes was but a minor passion among the many that disturbed his sensitive heart. I am not inclined to think that it was even a great or deep sympathy,

for nowhere has Burns's muse burst into song when thinking of its dead mate. Even the tombstone which Burns placed over Fergusson's grave, contains no lines other than the somewhat studied and cold—

“No sculptur'd marble here, nor pompous lay!  
No storied urn, nor animated bust!  
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way,  
To pour her sorrows o'er her poet's dust.”

If this were all the sympathy which was evoked from Burns by Fergusson's fate, it is not likely that the life and writings of the unfortunate poet could have exercised much influence upon his somewhat less unlucky successor, beyond the influence to which every sympathetic man is subjected by hearing of the trials and troubles of a fellow-man. There were no bands of personal friendship to draw the two together, for Fergusson was already dead one year before Burns, then a lad of scarce sixteen, with trepidation seized his pen to write, “O once I loved a bonny lass,” responsive to the feelings aroused in his breast by the charms of his female partner in the labours of the harvest. Thus the strongest influence that could be brought to bear on Burns in moulding the character of his verse was wanting; besides, as I have just shown, the character of Burns's verse was already marked when he first made acquaintance with the works of Fergusson. Summing up, then, the relation in which Burns stood to Fergusson, we see that it was simply one of sincere admiration.

This may have been Burns's estimate of his own merit alongside of that of Fergusson—but is it that of the world? No! The world knows little of Fergusson because the genius of Burns has quenched all lesser lights. He presents liberally all that can be asked for in Scottish poetry except the heroic, upon which Scott afterwards threw the light of his genius, though not to raise it to a higher standard than that of blind Harry. Those who have aimed to supply the same want which Burns satisfies have been forgotten, however able were their efforts, and however appreciated they were, until the spirit personified of Scottish poetry appeared in Robert Burns. Still there is a species of satisfaction felt in recalling forgotten words, just as there is a pleasure experienced in thinking of the story-



books that filled our young minds with wonderment; though while we dilate upon the boldness (baldness were better) of the primitive illustrations of the tales in our day, we may be gazing upon the rich art treasures spread before the young folks now to convey to them the dramatic scope of the hoary text. In proceeding, then, upon the assumption that a comparison of the effusions of Fergusson, the primitive, with Burns, the perfect, will not be altogether devoid of satisfaction to the reader, I think that it would hardly be just were I to ask for an endorsation of any judgment I may pass upon the works of Fergusson, without first making known to the reader, or reminding him, who and what the earlier poet was. It is offering no insult to the intelligence of the reader to give a short sketch of the poet, for, perhaps, his brief wanderings on the world are better known to foreigners than to his fellow-countrymen. The history of Burns is so well known that he is to all intents and purposes a living man to-day. Fergusson is of the past; let me see if I can animate the dust that is mouldering in the city of the dead in the modern Athens.

William Fergusson, the father of the poet, was of the conventional type, poor but honest. In serving an apprenticeship to a merchant in Aberdeen he discovered and cultivated with mild enthusiasm a propensity for stringing verses together. His business and poetic gifts do not seem to have procured for him much recognition in his native town. So he emigrated to Edinburgh, a journey of considerable magnitude in 1746, when the coasting vessel was the swiftest means of communication as well as the surest, (for just about this time quite a number of Highland gentlemen—being disappointed in obtaining English coronets for themselves, through the failure of the Pretender's invasion—were not averse to the humble crowns to be found in the pockets of their more cool-headed countrymen). William Fergusson did not have much satisfaction with his several masters, or perhaps his various masters did not have much satisfaction with him. At all events, the father of the subject of our sketch did not fall on his feet until he procured a situation in the office of the British Linen Company, where, perhaps, the many masters

were too busy looking after each other to have much time to look after their servants, a state of affairs which prevailed then, as now, in such concerns. William Fergusson's wife was an estimable woman whose life was bound up in the narrow, but exalted, sphere of promoting the happiness of home.

Robert Fergusson, the poet, was born on September 5th, 1750, and about all that is of interest in his family relations, is, that he was not an only son; that he had sisters, and that (perhaps owing to many of his poems being suggested by current topics), he never, by any chance, betrays the fact that he was not a Scottish Topsy, but had kith and kin like any ordinary poet. The folly of sending children to school to have their poor little noodles crammed with what to them is idle jingle, when they should be engaged in the exhilarating pursuit of compounding mud-pies, prevailed in those days, as now, and so it was matter of much concern to his father and mother that little Robert was of a constitution so delicate that he had reached six years, and his brain had not yet been tortured into retaining and repeating the ponderous rumbling noises—all that the Shorter Catechism is to a child. Doubtless, the worthy Mrs. Fergusson bemoaned with a heavy heart that "puir wee Bob," as she would call him, had not learned "What is Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification?" And, without doubt, her neighbours would bring in their wee "Jocks" and "Sandies" to repeat the "quashtions" or carritches—all, of course, for the benefit of "the bit bairn." In his sixth year Robert was put under private tuition, and so rapid was his progress that in six months he was prepared for entrance into the High School, then, as now, a school of high character. The future poet's bodily infirmities prevented regular application to his studies, but such was his natural ability, and so highly was he fired with ambition, that he managed to excel most of his competitors. When confined to the house, through illness, he developed a taste for reading, and found his chief delight in the Proverbs of Solomon—reading that will be delightful to everyone for all time, but of which a want of appreciation is decidedly manifest in these days of so-called



advanced taste. The lad, having continued four years at Edinburgh, was removed to Dundee High School, which is now of small importance as an educational institution, though it was, at that time, one of the best. Here, under the same depressing circumstances as surrounded his career at Edinburgh, Fergusson, for two years, earned marked distinction. Like most Scotch families of the middle class, that of William Fergusson had in solemn council decided that one of its members should "wag his pow i' a poopit," and Robert, being the most unlikely to give as good as he got in the turmoil of commercial life, was the one upon whom the choice fell. So, his friends being appealed to, their efforts secured for Robert a bursary at St. Andrews, where he began his university career at the age of thirteen. His natural abilities speedily commanded attention, though their scope was, perhaps, somewhat obscured by the youth's propensity for fun and frolic. At that time Dr. Wilkie was professor of Natural Philosophy, and he was attracted by the sickly lad, taking such a fancy to him, it is alleged, though without much appearance of credibility, that Robert was deputed to read the professor's prelections, when the latter was unable to occupy his chair. When he was entered as a Civis of the Divinity class, Robert seems to have begun to cultivate his muse, and with charming perversity, despising the theologians' idea of the time that the drama was a device of Satan to ruin men's souls, the first use which he is found making of his talent is to write two acts of a tragedy, entitled *William Wallace*. Perchance he excused himself from dallying with the devil's hand-maiden, on the score of patriotism, as did a friend of my own whose father caught him at similar work, and, wishing to advance some arguments against play-writing, stopped to punctuate his remarks with a broomstick; perhaps it would be more correct were I to say that he made his remarks with the broomstick, and let his want of breath supply punctuation. It is the aspiration of every Scottish youth to write a tragedy on Wallace. They do not know that incident is, after all, only the framework of a dramatic picture, and that Wallace's life does not present anything out of which to construct more than a dramatic

panorama. The aspirations of some few Scotch youths have led them on into two acts of a tragedy on this subject before their ambition became flat and unprofitable. A very few have reached five acts, but these youths died young. Robert Fergusson having stopped short at two acts, lived, but it seems that after four years, when his bursary expired, he had advanced backwards so far in his ideas about being a minister, that he decided to turn to another refuge—the law. Two years before the end of his university career, his father died, but this had no great influence upon Robert, for the last two years of his life at St. Andrews were of a piece with those during which he earned the character of being a light-headed young man. His mother was too poor to maintain him at home, and Robert was so unsettled in his habits that he could make no provision for himself. Following his restless impulse, he went to Aberdeen to see a rich uncle, who received and entertained him hospitably for six months, then turned him out of doors. The poor youth had no money and his personal appearance had become decidedly shabby. His heart burning with anger at his uncle, who had made no exercise of his influence to procure work for him, Fergusson set his face to the south, and started to walk to Edinburgh. Halting when a short distance on his way, and seizing pen and paper he sent a bitter letter to Mr. Forbes, that had the effect of drawing from the latter the offer of a few shillings, which was accepted by the poet, who excused himself in accepting the tardy aid by pleading the absolute want in which he had to undertake his long journey. Edinburgh was reached on foot, but the poor young fellow was exhausted, and was confined to bed for several days, during which his feelings found vent in writing his *Decay of Friendship*, and *Against Repining at Fortune*. Before long, Fergusson obtained a situation in the Commissary Clerk's office, but the tyranny of the deputy drove him forth into the streets once more. A considerable time elapsed before he obtained his next and last situation, one in the office of the Sheriff Clerk, where he practised until his death all he ever knew of law—transcribing law documents at so much per folio. Fergusson really did make an attempt to study law, but he aban-



done it like others illustrious in literature, among whom may be named, in passing, Tasso, Ariosto, Petrarch, Corneille, Rowe, Scott, and Dickens. Fergusson only transcribed enough to enable him to procure simple comforts, chief among which, unfortunately, was whiskey. But while applying himself with assiduity to increasing His Majesty's revenue in this way, the poet did not neglect his muse, and almost every number of *Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine* was enriched by contributions from his pen. He was speedily recognized as a man of great talent, and in the absence of men of genius, such as Scott and Burns, who came after him, was the lion of the day among that class, which then, as now, thinks that association with men of letters conceals its own illiterate conceit. From among these wealthy worshippers of what they themselves had not, Fergusson did not succeed in procuring a patron; in these days more essential for the elevation of merit to financial success than genius itself. Many there were who patronized the poor man in the worst possible way, by enticing him from the earning of his daily bread to consummating his daily death, for with pity be it said, poor Fergusson was too often snatched from sensibility by the seductive embrace of his country's Delilah—drink. As other of his finer qualities were being effaced by residence, it might be termed, in taverns, phoenix-like out of the ruins rose the strong religious principles which had been instilled into him in his youth. In the wreck of his humanity vice fought religion, and was vanquished; but alas! the man was left lifeless—Fergusson became an idiot! He was found wandering in the streets looking for the murderers of Christ. Having seen a Jew in the street, he told a friend confidentially that he was about to have the reprobate disposed of according to law. For a time he was harmless, until by injury in falling down a stair his brain was unsettled and he became a raging maniac, with few intervals of unchained repose. In these intervals his mother and his elder sister visited him, and touching, indeed, must have been the sad interviews. On the sixteenth day of October, 1774, he had a terrible paroxysm. He fell exhausted upon the straw on the floor, and there he was

found, his features in repose, and the hand outstretched towards a plaited crown of straw. Such was the end of Robert Fergusson.

That I should jog any reader's recollections of the career of Burns is unnecessary. For my present purpose what will recur to everyone of the life of the chief of Scottish poesy will be quite as fresh as the details which I have given of the poet Fergusson. They are now both known to my readers. Permit me, then, to institute a comparison between the writings of the Edinburgh scribe and the earlier works of the Ayrshire ploughman. In these poems, published in the first two editions, one may expect to find Burns kindling at the flame of Fergusson, if at any time the greater light borrowed from the lesser. Fergusson was fond of writing pastorals in the Sicilian school. The most ambitious of these was in three parts—*Morning*, *Noon*, and *Night*. It cannot be said that this pastoral makes any great impression on the reader. The conception is devoid of dramatic strength, and borrows none of the beauty of nature which it attempts to describe. In perusing it I cannot leave out of my imagination the picture of a rural school examination when two of the hopeful 'speak their piece.' Here and there one can discern beauties which are all but hidden by uncouth expression and monotonous utterance. Perhaps an idea of the commonplace character of the diction may be appreciated when it is remembered that the best lines in *Morning* are the closing ones:

*Damon*—But hush Alexis, reach your leafy shade,  
Which mantling ivy round the oak hath made;  
There we'll retire, and list the warbling note  
That flows melodious from the blackbird's throat;  
Your easy numbers shall his song inspire,  
And ev'ry warbler join the gen'ral choir.

This is easy versification, but it is not poetry, nor can it be said that the following lines from *Noon*, the best, are much, if at all, better

*Timanthes*—Ah, hapless youth! although thy early  
muse,  
Painted her semblance on thy youthful brows:  
Tho' she with laurels twin'd thy temples round,  
And in thy ear distill'd the magic sound;  
A cheerless poverty attends thy woes,  
Your song melodious unrewarded flows.

It would be labour indeed to get enthusiastic over lines like these. Even when the



poet changes from self to adoration of the Author of his being, the change of theme brings no elevation of language or of conception; as witness these lines, the best that may be culled from the third section of the pastoral *Night*.

*Amyntas*—By Him the morning darts his purple ray;  
To Him the birds their early homage pay;  
With vocal harmony the meadows ring,  
While swans in concert heav'nly praises sing.

There is nothing with which this pastoral can be contrasted in Burns's writings, for Burns never dealt in the abstract or sentimental. In everything that the Ayrshire ploughman wrote throbs a great human heart. His poetry is always passionate, never philosophically contemplative. Still, to do justice to Fergusson, his pastorals could not well be overlooked, but having glanced at one, and that the best, let it suffice. A poem of Fergusson's which must ever be of interest to those who read his works is that on "The Decay of Friendship," composed under the painful circumstances to which I have previously adverted. This poem strongly shows that the best of Fergusson's work in the English tongue hardly rises above versification. It opens thus:

"When gold, man's sacred deity did smile,  
My friends were plenty and my sorrows few;  
Mirth, love and bumpers did my hours beguile,  
And arrow'd cupids round my slumbers flew."

Another verse I may quote to show his style:

"Sweet are the waters to the parched tongue;  
Sweet are the blossoms to the wanton bee;  
Sweet to the shepherd sounds the lark's shrill song,  
But sweeter far is SOLITUDE to me."

Schoolboys have failed to earn distinction with better verses than these, though one cannot help admiring the alliterative effect in the last verse. His thought, it will be observed, is commonplace to-day, and was commonplace even when he wrote. There is a lack of energy and a forced fluency that are repellent; for, however choice may be a poet's diction, if it be lacking in life it cannot touch the soul of the reader. How different is Burns, when he tunes his lyre to lament the want of true friendship. He rises superior to a personal plaint, and speaks for the human race in *Man was made to Mourn*. In the very first verse of this remarkable poem

the reader has pictured before him the dark side of the world by the simple words, "Chill November's surly blast, made fields and forests bare," and conviction already possesses him because he is prepared to hear speak an aged man, whose face was furrowed o'er with years and crowned with hoary hair. The patriarch speaks no words of peevishness, but out of the fulness of a heart that has room for a world's grief, and charity for a world's wilfulness, he says:

"O man! while in thy early years  
How prodigal of time!  
Mis-spending all thy precious hours;  
Thy glorious youthful prime!  
Alternate follies take the sway;  
Licentious passions burn,  
Which tenfold force give Nature's law,  
That man was made to mourn."

I could wish to go fully into the difference here displayed between the two poets, but must hasten on with the observation that Burns never made his own sufferings the theme of his muse; he knew that he had himself to blame for all that overtook him, and was conscious of deserving greater retribution than fell upon him. Fergusson is oblivious to his own faults and failings, and meanders in sentimental pastoral scenes, obtruding his own wretchedness against the ripe joyousness of Nature. The one is selfish, and forces his selfishness into its most unnatural setting—a surrounding of inanimate nature; the other sinks self in humanity, is humanity's champion, and boldly stands forth in the setting which of all others gives force to his warfare—the sufferings of his friends, the people, one of the least deserving of whom he, by the mystic influence of genius, shows himself to be.

What I might term the companion poem to *The Decay of Friendship* is *Against repining at Fortune*. This is one of the best of Fergusson's English poems, but it, too, is monotonous in expression, and commonplace in thought. Towards the end of the poem one can detect a more hopeful spirit. Indeed, were it not for the last two verses, the preceding ten might almost have followed the prior poem as a sort of mild depreciation of the fancied happiness of those neglectful friends of whom he had been complaining. The two last verses are:



"Tis not in richest mines of Indian gold  
That man this jewel, happiness, can find,  
If his unfeeling breast, to virtue cold,  
Denies her entrance to his ruthless mind.  
Wealth, pomp and honour are but gaudy toys;  
Alas, how poor the pleasures they impart!  
Virtue's the sacred source of all the joys  
That claim a lasting mansion in the heart."

There is more true poetry in the last two lines than in all that precede them; still, after all, any poet, not a poetaster, has produced lines equally good. I will not cite lines of Burns to place alongside of these; to do so would be superfluous, for Burns preaches virtue as the source of joy in tones of conviction that are all arresting. A belief in virtue was taught him at his father's knee, and he could not be indebted to the "poor unfortunate Fergusson" for inspiration in his praise of virtue. I would not have touched upon these two poems of Fergusson's were it not that these, being the poems to which was attached the deepest personal interest, it might fairly be expected that had Burns really been deeply impressed by the reading of Fergusson's works, the *Decay of Friendship*, and *Against repining at Fortune*, would have given a decided bent to his writings. I may not have succeeded in showing that the two poets are diverse in their treatment of the same subject (because I have not quoted the poems in full) where diversity of treatment did not do violence to our common humanity, but my own conviction is that Burns certainly was not affected by Fergusson's writings, when he was so situated, that Burns's strongest sympathies would be lavished upon him. And if not then, when would he be?

Let us glance at Fergusson's treatment of the rivers of Scotland, and at that of Burns. Fergusson wrote an ode on *The Rivers of Scotland*; Burns on *Bruar Water*, *Bonnie Doon*, *Ayr* and *Lugar*. What a charm is in the simple ploughman's lays. As we listen to them we hear the gurgling waters kiss the pebbled shore. How stilted is Fergusson's! What a confused vision one has of Neptune, mermaids, tritons, naiads, and artificiality generally, for even his tuneful shepherd is not a rustic swain. Burns never encumbers his verse with mystic beings, who might as well not be in the scene depicted. Where

supernatural apparitions are introduced by Burns, they are already looked for by the reader, as witness the appearance of "The Sprites that o'er the Brigs of Ayr preside." I could have liked to contrast the two poets' treatment of the seasons—Fergusson, unequal, inconsequent, and apostrophizing, though at times rising to considerable dignity as when he sings:

"Mute are the plains; the shepherd pipes no more;  
The reed's forsaken, and the tender flock,  
While echo, listening to the tempest's roar,  
In silence wanders o'er the beetling rock."

Burns, at all times a living part of what he depicts, comprehensive even when his words are brief, sings:

"While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,  
And roars frae bank tae brae,  
And bird and beast in covert rest,  
And pass the heartless day.

The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,  
My griefs it seems to join,  
The leafless trees my fancy please,  
Their fate resembles mine."

Or, again, when in his introduction to *The Cottar's Saturday Night*:

"November chill blows long wi' angry sough  
The short'ning winter day is near a close:  
The miry beasts retreating frae the plough,  
The black'ning train o' craws to their repose."

Surely Burns did not borrow any descriptive inspiration from his predecessor. Fergusson has written a poem on (bed) *Bugs*, Burns on a *Louse*; but how different is their treatment of this, surely a kindred subject. Fergusson's lines are most inflated, pompous, and ponderous. He drags in Homer on the Grecian plains, the movement of the spheres, the murmuring cadence of the floods, the Dryads near Edina's walls, Pan and his rural train of shepherds and nymphs, Chloe's bosom, alabaster fair, and so on. On the contrary, Burns possesses his reader with a creeping curiosity, and at the same time deals a giant's blow at self-conceit.

Again, Burns had the faculty of making animals speak. *The Twa Dogs* and *Poor Mailie* are much more real to most men than Balaam's ass. Burns loved animals, and those who read his works speak with him to his old mare Maggie, to the "wee sleekit cow'rin' tim'rous mouse," "to the wounded



hare" and "to the waterfowl." Fergusson's nearest approach to investing animals with humanity, if I may be permitted to use such a phrase, is a fable entitled *The Peasant, the Hen, and Young Ducks*, which is so trifling that one is saved the trouble of making haste to forget it.

One would think that the wild whirl of tavern-life would have drawn from Fergusson something in which he could give expression to exuberance of spirits; in which he could reproduce what was to him the greatest excitement as well as the greatest pleasure that he could experience, but no! A cold sentimental, lifeless elegy is all that can be placed alongside Burns's *Scotch Drink* and his *Earnest Cry and Prayer to the Scotch Representatives in the House of Commons*. The *Daft Days*, I think one of the best of Fergusson's writings, but it is a poor substitute for the dramatic story of *Tam o' Shanter* and *Souter Johnny*, the cronies who "had been fou' for weeks thegither." Two verses of the *Daft Days* I shall here quote:

"Auld Reikie, thou'rt the canty hole,  
A bield for many a cauldrie soul,  
Wha snugly at thine ingle loll  
Baith warm and couth,  
While round they gar the bicker roll,  
To weet their mouth.

Fiddlers, your pins in temper fix  
And rozet weel your fiddle-sticks,  
But banish vile Italian tricks  
Frae out your quorum,  
Nor fortes wi' pianos mix,  
Gie's Tullochgorum."

There is more of the personal presence in this poem than anything that Fergusson ever wrote, and it is possessed of a vivifying power that is absent in his eclogues. It is a composition which above all others would justify one in taking whatever else Fergusson wrote as "glorious dawns." I have reserved, for closing, a consideration of those poems in which Fergusson is seen in his happiest vein, and towards which Burns is most closely inclined. In theme and structure there is a resemblance between Fergusson's *The Hallow Fair* and *Leith Races*, and Burns's *The Holy Fair*, as also between Fergusson's *The Farmer's Ingle*, and Burns's *The Cottar's Saturday Night*. In the *Hallow*

*Fair* and *Leith Races*, and in the *Holy Fair*, the versification is the same, but it is a versification that was old even when Fergusson wrote, and was adopted by Burns, so far as is known, before he had ever seen any poem of Fergusson's. The versification—eight lines and a rider, "— —that day"—is a modification of *Christis' Kirk of the Grene*, written by King James I., and to which Currie attributes the force and structure of most of the rural poetry, Currie making a remark, in his *Essay on Scottish Poetry*, to the effect that it is peculiar that the only nation in Europe which had an original poetry, should have had the form of its poetry handed down to its rural poets from a monarch. In Fergusson's poem on the Hallow Fair, he describes the scene at a rural fair, the chapmen selling their wares, the whisky-drinking, enlisting, fighting, and characteristic humours of such a celebration in his day. In *Leith Races* he describes meeting with a mystic being, called *Mirth*, the fairest quean "neath the lift," whose "een were o' the siller sheen, her skin like snawy drift." The two agree to go to the races, and there observe her "power and pith." They go, but in the agreement to go is seen the last of this sprite *Mirth*, Fergusson thereafter describing with great gusto the humours of the races as they appeared to him. Burns's poems is like a combination of the two by Fergusson. In early morning of the Sacramental Sunday he is sniffing the caller air, when "three huzzies cam skelpin' up the way." The two looked like twins, and "sour as ony slaes," while the third, who was behind, "came up, hap-stap-an'loup, as light as ony lammie." With rustic grace the poet replies to the "curchie" of the taller one, who tells that her name is FUN, that the other two are SUPERSTITION and HYPOCRISY, that all three are on the way to the holy fair. The poet says that he will get his "Sunday sark on," and join her at the fair. This is the last we see of the trio, and here observe the resemblance between the structure of the poems of Fergusson. In the eighth verse Burns would seem to imply that the three damsels were there, but nothing approaching to an interchange of sentiment takes place. Burns, like Fergusson, dwells at length on the humours of



the scene, and though the subjects be different the treatment is, in a measure, similar. It will, however, be conceded, that Burns develops much greater power of description and moral intensity than Fergusson. So marked is this, that it is doing no injustice to Fergusson to say that Burns did not imitate him. It is impossible to suggest any other mode of treatment than that which both Fergusson and Burns followed, and besides it is the treatment which King James gave, or Ramsay makes him give, to *Christis' Kirk on the Grene*. While inclined to set a higher value upon Fergusson's writings than, perhaps, may stand the test of common sense, I think that it would hardly be correct to add to their lustre the reflex light of Burns's *Holy Fair*.

Fergusson's *Farmer's Ingle* is a poem of very great merit, but it is essentially an effort of descriptive power, and not a heart's tribute to the dead, as was Burns's *Cottar's Saturday Night*. Fergusson described what had created admiration in him, what seemed an exceeding lovely portion of that rural life whose beauties woke response in his soul, and caused it to burst forth in song. The farmer and his "gudame" were not a father and mother upon whose memories the flowers of love and wreaths of veneration were daily showered by a son, to stay the mildest impulse of whose wayward soul a stray thought of childhood's home was potent. Burns poured his whole soul forth to do honour to his parents, and his tribute has the intensity of despair—the despair of ever being worthy of those to whom he owed all of the heavenly that in him was for ever at war with the carnal passions of his own creation. Fergusson's poem breathes so much spirit; it is essentially contemplative. Still, it appeals strongly to the fancy, if not to the heart, as witness these two verses: (Supper is supposed to be over.)

The fient a chiep's amang the bairnies now,  
For a' their anger's wi' their hunger gane;  
Ay maun the childer, wi' a fastin' mou',  
Grumble and greet, and make an unco mane.

In rangles round before the ingle's low,  
Frae Gudame's mouth auld warld tales they hear,  
O' warlocks loupin' round the worrikow,  
O' ghaists that win in glen and kirkyard dreary  
Whilk touzles a' their tap, and gars them shake wi' fear.

For weel she trows that fiends and fairies be  
Sent frae the de'il to flecth us to our ill;  
That kye hae tint their milk wi' evil e'e,  
And corn been scowder'd on the glowing kill.  
O mock nae this, my friends! but rather mourn,  
Ye in life's brawest spring, wi' reason clear,  
Wi' eild our idle fancies a' return  
And dim our dolefu' days wi' bairnly fear,  
The mind's aye cradled when the grave is near.

The closing lines of this last verse are singularly touching. Even Burns himself could not have more gracefully or compassionately described that terrible state "dotage." Burns's poem is also in Alexandrine verse, the last line being of the long measure used by Byron with such effect in his *Address to the Ocean*, and which may be likened to the roll of the breaker following the fall of wavelets on the shore. The necessity of quoting *The Cottar's Saturday Night* to show that Burns did not in writing it kindle his genius at the flame of Fergusson's muse, is spared to me by the accepted belief that the poem is a spontaneous expression of the veneration of Burns for his parents. All are familiar with that great word-picture, in which humanity sees its heart's most heavenly pulses shrined, a picture in which Heaven is beheld on earth.

Thus far and no further do we go in our search for similarity in the writings of the two poets. Fruitless it has been, if not devoid of pleasure. What need that we persevere? Is it not daily our experience that the firmament of literature is as the firmament above us? The bright stars of the early evening pale before the moon's refulgent light, and that again is resolved, as it were, into darkness by the full glare of the sun's rays. So it is when ability fades before cultured intelligence—to fall into nothingness at the advent of genius.



## XXXIX.—THE ABERDEEN BURNS CLUB.

FROM "IRVINE HERALD," 14TH JUNE, 1889.

ALTHOUGH Robert Burns, when he passed through Aberdeen, in 1787, does not seem to have been favourably influenced by what he saw and heard (he called it "a lazy toon"), yet the good folks of Bon-Accord have never borne the Bard any grudge for his non appreciation of their personal merits and material surroundings. His poems and songs have ever held a warm place in the hearts of the dwellers in "the silver city by the sea;" and while the Aberdeen Burns Club has to be spoken of in the sense of comparatively recent birth, the years of its life as a semi-private institution must not be summed up as the period during which the genius of the author of "Mary Morrison," "The Cottar's Saturday Night," and "Tam O' Shanter" has obtained admiring recognition in the North. In Aberdeen, the 25th of January has long been held in loving remembrance by many poetically inclined citizens as the natal day of him

Who walked in glory and in joy,

Following his plough upon the mountain side—

though there does not seem to exist special record of anything like public celebration of the now world-wide "red-letter day" in the history of Scottish literature.

Small circles and coteries, hale, hearty fellows, doubtless there were who assembled on the return of the memorable night in January when the wind "blew hansel in on Robin," and fittingly paid tribute to his memory, sang his sweetest songs, and recited his best narrative and descriptive poems; but it was not till 1871 or 1872 that the body who are now recognised as "The Aberdeen Burns Club" first took form. They did so under very unpretentious—indeed primitive—aspirations and surroundings. Something like this:—A gentleman familiarly known in the city for his literary and musical proclivities suggested to half-a-dozen like-minded friends that they might convene for a couple of hours or so, after business, on one or other of the years mentioned, and speak about the story of Robert Burns—its lights and shadows, its beauty and its blight. The proposal was

readily accepted, and the meeting took place in a popular hostelry—the Adelphi Hotel, to wit. 'Twas a very simple, homely affair—Finnan haddocks, Portlethen crabs, with Deeside oatcakes for supper, due and needful accompaniment being added in the way of native beverage, hot or cold, as taste dictated. The following year the conference was renewed in the same place, the number of deputies now, however, being some twelve or fifteen—few but fit. On both these preliminary occasions—for such they may be justly styled—the chair was occupied by the "founder of the feast" referred to above—Mr. Wm. Carnie (best known, perhaps, as editor of "The Northern Psalter," and author of "Waifs of Rhyme"). It is from 1875 that the order of things in connection with the Club may be said to have attained anything like a formal business character. A Committee of *two* then "took matters in hand." Yes, the quoted declaration is right. A couple of the original members who could run pretty well together in harness in most movements actually "took" direction of the Club. They did not choose to wait for considerate nomination or flattering appointment. No, they had, and indeed still retain, a good conceit of themselves, and the upshot is that, during all time since 1875, the two individuals in question have, *minus* fee or reward, and as they complacently in their own wisdom believe, *sans* shortcomings in deed or document, conducted the affairs of the Aberdeen Burns Club. The habits of this "Mysterious Committee," as they are dubbed, may, in truth, be taken as a warning, or example, just as they strike persons like situated. For instance, while the membership of the Club has on and up to this present year of grace, 1889, vastly increased, no single soul, apparently, knows anything whatever regarding the position of its concerns! But now these are to see the light through the agency of the *Irvine Herald*. The majority of Burns Clubs are guided and directed pretty much by rules, regulations, etc. Rules! there are no rules



for the Aberdeen Club. The self-appointed Committee, in their superiority, recognise no such trammels. They call the annual 25th of January dinner, they draw up a toast list, they print names of speakers to give and reply, they levy assessments to pay, as they put it, "various expenses;" but they have never written or kept a solitary scrap or record in the way of minutes, and they positively decline to say how or where the money goes! The outcome of this "silent system of business" (the Committee's favourite phrase) has been that there never was a division or vote on any point or subject whatsoever, sacred or secular, in connection with the Club. The *closure* has been applied most effectively, and strange to note, accepted by the members of the Club in a manner highly creditable to forbearing human kind—not to speak of profit on the score of saving time. This important though unwritten understanding has, however, been without challenge or break observed, that the chairman for the time is always promoted from the seat of the croupier.

For at least ten years past the membership of the Aberdeen Burns Club has averaged thirty-five, and the dinner takes place by turns in the principal hotels of the city. During its existence the membership has embraced not a few of the leading spirits of the community—professional, literary, and commercial; while amongst others who have filled the office of chairman, memory pleasantly recalls the following:—The late Dr. Robert Beveridge, an able and popular "brother of the mystic tie," and esteemed magistrate of the town; Mr. William Cadenhead, author of "Flights of Fancy;" Mr. John S. Stuart, assistant railway manager; Mr. Alexander Yeats, Depute Town-Clerk; Dr. William Alexander, editor *Free Press* and author of "Johnnie Gibb of Gushetneuk"; Rev. C. C. Macdonald, St. Clement's Parish Church; Professor William Minto, Aberdeen University; Dr. Forbes M. Moir, of Tarnash; Mr. James Rettie, jeweller; Mr. William Milne, advocate; Mr. James Walker, wine merchant; Mr. Robert Cooper, shorthand writer, Sheriff Court; Mr. Robert Anderson, sub-editor *Free Press*; Mr. James Moir, rector, Grammar School; Councillor John Morgan, etc. The opinion may be ventured that

these gentleman in giving dinner, as Presidents, the standing toast "The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns," fully appreciated the genius of the bard in words at once eloquent, just, and sympathetic. Yet while the speaking can be noticed as always interesting, the special and salient features of the meetings of the Aberdeen Burns Club, when the "cloth is removed," have ever been the singing and reciting of songs and poems old and new. The Club from its earliest days onward has been fortunate enough to include in its ranks the ablest resident vocalists—professional and amateur—and these gentlemen do not spare themselves, through their cultivated musical gifts, in adding to the enjoyment of their fellow-members. With almost equal warmth, too, should be recognised the efforts of the reciters—more particularly those of Mr. Cadenhead, one of the original and best beloved of the body. This gentleman is most worthily looked upon as the Laureate of the Club, for in this capacity he yearly treats the company to a fresh poem composed for the occasion, and this article may fittingly enough have for its closing lines one of the more recent contributions from his pen—a contribution which cannot but recommend itself to the readers of "Burnsiana," more especially such of them as have visited the old Globe Hotel, Dumfries:—

#### BURNS'S AULD ARM-CHAIR.

Some months ago a friend and I,  
An autumn holiday to try,  
Wandered wi' hearts to pleasure strung  
Whaur Coleridge and Wordsworth sung—  
Whaur the Lake Muses all abide  
By Rydal, Grasmere, Ambleside—  
And found our rapture still increase  
When our steps led us to Dumfries—  
Dumfries, where Burns his latest days  
Spent, singing still immortal lays;  
Dumfries, which holds his honoured dust,  
With worthy pride, in sacred trust.

We saw the Nith, and had a stray  
Among Lincluden's ruins gray;  
But chiefly sought the streets to thread  
That once rung to the poet's tread,  
Trying his homes and haunts to probe;  
And lastly landed in the "Globe,"  
That "howf" whaur mony a nicht he spent  
In sometimes doubtful merriment;  
Whaur still, graved on the window panes,  
You recognise his hand and strains;  
And in a corner, nursed with care,



Stands his accustomed old arm-chair—  
A seat you need not doubt we tried  
With awe, and somewhat kindred pride,  
For we had baith, at antrin times,  
Sought to express our thought in rhymes.

Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair,  
Doubt na but I had visions rare—  
I saw its e'e the gloaming steek  
Upon the last day o' the week ;  
And round the hearth the bairns a' gather  
By eident mother, kindly father ;  
While cheery cracks and joyous smirle  
Gang round about the youthfu' circle  
As Jeannie's sweetheart, ill at ease,  
Praises the guidwife's weel-hained cheese—  
Syne a', I see, concludes wi' prayer,  
Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair.

Sittin' in Robbie Burns's chair—  
It's market day in guid auld Ayr,  
And Shanter's Tam, the hearty fouter,  
Is bousin' with the drouthy souter.  
The nicht grows dark, the thunder's roar  
Is heard aboon the sangs and splore :  
Tam mounts, and skelpin' thro' the glaur,  
Rides heedless o' the tempest's war.  
But see ! what gleams flash thro' the mirk  
Frae ilka winnock o' the kirk !  
What legs frae cutty sarks are prancin' !  
What music, deevilry, and dancin' !  
Whiff ! at a word the vision closes ;—  
Tho' joys, when stown, are sweet as roses,  
Ye'll pay, Tam, for yon temptin' glimmer ;  
She's after you, the supple limmer !  
Ply whip and spur, man !—What befell  
Poor tail-less Maggie best can tell.  
A' this I witnessed, veeve and fair,  
Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair.

Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair,  
A galaxy of maidens fair  
And carles and cummers licht and loom  
In ilka corner o' the room ;

Those who in warm life's-blood he knew,  
And those his potent fancy drew.  
There's Captain Grose, ye lang hae kent him,  
He's takin' notes, and haith he'll print them ;  
There's Death, wi' leister keen and fell,  
There's even auld Nickie Ben himsel' ;  
There's Willie Wastle, Duncan Gray,  
Tam Glen, and mony a hunder mae ;

And 'mang the rest,  
That stalwart ghaist,  
Attir'd as minstrels wont to be,  
Wha wore aroon his bannet bree  
The sacred poesy "Libertie."  
Awa, ye carles sae grim and hairy !  
There's dear, kind, simple Highland Mary ;  
And, glancin' wi' her lovin' een,  
Sweet, aft-neglected, constant Jean ;  
It's true, O lovely Polly Stewart,  
May flowers are nae sae sweet as thou art ;  
Wha wadna toil frae sun to sun  
For thee, dear Mary Morrison !  
Jeanie ! I'd fain thy bosom fill,  
Wha sighed sae sair wi' care an' pain,  
Fain teach thee what had made thee ill,  
And what wad mak' thee weel again.  
O, Anna wi' the gowden locks !  
Frae thee a curl I fain wad coax  
Or share—in moments bricht tho' few—  
Yon pint o' wine wi' Burns and you ;  
But I'm clean dazed wi' visions rare  
Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair !  
Sittin' in Burns's auld arm-chair,  
A cry of sorrow fills the air ;  
Echo takes up the utterance dread—  
"The minstrel Burns is dead—is dead !"

Up the long street the sad procession comes,  
The bugles wail, and sob the muffled drums ;  
St. Michael takes within its ancient ward  
All that is mortal of the Scottish bard—  
Sweet, faithful Jean starts 'mid her travail's tears  
As those sad volleys ring upon her ears ;  
My tears, responsive, blur the visions fair  
I had while sitting in that old arm-chair.

## XL.—THE WEST REBUKED !

BY JOHN MACFARLANE.

(Lines written on reading that the great-grand daughter of Burns, who is said to have "the poet's eyes," refused to be placed on exhibition at the Chicago World's Fair.)

IRREVERENT Age ! Irreverent West !  
Submitting all things unto gold ;  
Nor deemest that within the breast  
Some sanctities may not be sold !  
A peasant-Princess—in her veins  
The blood of Scotia's King of Hearts—

Repels with scorn thy proffered gains,  
And shame's the pride of all thy marts !  
O ! gentle maid, with soul alive,  
To higher things than trade "returns ;"  
The Mammon-Meanness may not thrive,  
Where flash the eyes of ROBERT BURNS !























Burnsiana: A collection of literary odds and ends relating to Robert Burns  
compiled by John Dawson Ross

Bd.: 3.

1894

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